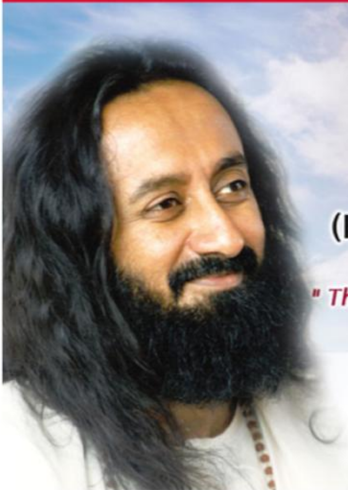
CONCEPT OF GOD
IN HINDUISM AND ISLAM

Complete Transcript
of AN INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE
of
SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR & ZAKIR NAIK
Held on 21st January 2006 at Palace Groundl,
Mekhri Circle, Bangalore

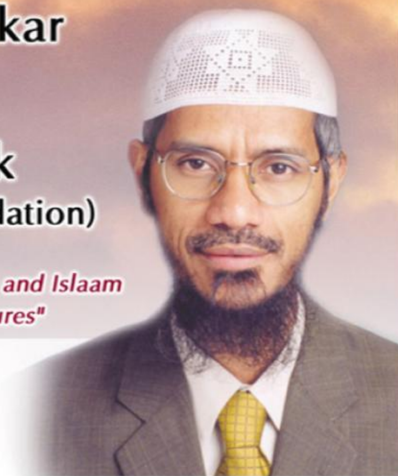
An Inter-Religious Dialogue for Spiritual Enlightenment by



Sri Sri Ravishankar
(Art of Living)

&

Dr. Zakir Naik
(Islamic Research Foundation)



on the topic:

" The Concept of GOD in Hinduism and Islaam - in the light of sacred scriptures"

Date: 21-01-2006

Time : 6.30 pm to 10 pm

Venue : Palace Grounds, Mekhri Circle Bangalore

Part I of the Talk by Dr. Zakir Naik

Alhamdulillah, wa salaathu wa salaam ala rasoolillah
wa ala ali wa sahabihi wa ajmain, amma baad.
A uzu billahi minas shayta nir-rajeem,
Bismillah hirrahmanirraheem,
Qul ya ahla alkitabi taAAalawila
kalimatin sawa-in baynana
wabaynakum allanaAAbuda illa
Allaha wala nushrika bihishayan
wala yattakhitha baAAdunabaAAdan arbaban min dooni
Allahi fa-intawallaw faqooloo ishhadoo
bi-anna muslimoona.
Qala rabbi ishrah lee sadree, Wayassir lee amree,
Waohlul AAuqdatan min lisanee, Yafqahoo qawlee.

My respected Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, my respected elders and my dear brothers and sisters, I welcome all of you with the Islamic greetings.

Asalaam ualaikum wa rahmathullahi wa barakathu
(May peace, mercy and blessings of Allah, Almighty God be on all of you).

The topic of this evening's inter-religious dialogue is the concept of God in Hinduism and Islam in the light of the sacred scriptures. I started my talk by quoting a Verse

from the glorious Qur'an from Surah Al-Imraan Chapter #3 Verse #64 which says : Qul ya ahla alkitabi (say oh people of the Book) taAAalawila kalimatin sawa-in baynana wabaynakum (come to common terms as in us and you) which is the first term? allanaAAbuda illa Allaha (that you worship none but Allah, Almighty God) wala nushrika bihishay-an (that we associate no partners with him) wala yattakhitha baAAdunabaAAdan arbaban min dooni Allahi (that we erect not among ourselves Lords and Patrons other than Allah) faintawallaw (if they turn back)faqooloo ishhadoo (say you bear witness) bi-anna muslimoona (that we are Muslims bowing our will to Allah Almighty God). This Verse of the glorious Qur'an though it particularly speaks to the ahle kithaab, the Jews and Christians, it is meant for all different types of people, it says "taAAalawila kalimatin sawa-in baynana wabaynakum." (come to common terms as with us and you) which is the first term? allanaAAbuda illa Allaha (that you worship none but God Almighty) wala nushrika bihishay-an (that we associate no partners with him).

It is not appropriate to try and understand a religion or to try and understand the concept of God in a religion, by observing the followers of that religion because many a times the followers of that religion, they themselves may not be aware about the religion or the concept of God in the religion; neither it is appropriate to observe or look at the traditions or the cultures of the followers of the

religion because many of the cultures and traditions may not be part of the religion. The best and the most authentic way to understand any religion or the concept of God in a religion is to try and understand what the sacred scriptures have to speak about that religion or the concept of God in that religion. Before we discuss the concept of God in Hinduism and Islam in the light of the sacred scriptures, let us understand what is the meaning of the words Hinduism and Islam. The word Hindu has geographical significance and was used to describe the people living beyond the river Sindhu or people living in the land watered by river Indus. Most of the historians, they say, that this word Hindu was first used by the Arabs.

Some historians say it was used by the Persians when they came to India through the north western passes of Himalaya.

According to encyclopedia of religion and ethics, Volume #6, Reference #699, it says that the word Hindu was not found in any of the Indian literature before the advent of the Muslims to India. According to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, he writes in his Book "the discovery of India" on page #74 and #75 that the word Hindu can be earliest traced to a source a tantrik in 8th century and it was used initially to describe the people, it was never used to describe religion. Its connection with religion is of late

occurrence according to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The word Hinduism is derived from the word Hindu. The word Hinduism was first used by the English writers in the 19th century to describe the multiplicity of faiths of the people of India. According to new Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume #20, Reference #581, it says the word Hinduism was first used by the British writers in the year 1830 to describe the multiplicity of the faiths of the people of India excluding the converted Christians. That is the reason today, majority of the Hindu scholars they say that the word Hinduism is a misnomer. The correct word should be Sanatan Dharm, the eternal religion or the Vedic Dharm, the religion of the Vedas. According to Swami Vivekananda, he says the word Hindu is a misnomer; the correct word should be a Vendantist, a person who follows the Vedas.

Let us understand what is the meaning of the word Islam. Islam comes from the root Arabic word salam, which means peace. It is also derived from the Arabic word silm, which means to submit your will to Almighty God. In short, Islam means peace acquired by submitting your will to Almighty God and this word Islam occurs in several places in the Qur'an and the Sahih Hadith including in the Qur'an in Surah Al-Imraan, Chapter #3 Verse #19 and Surah Al-Imraan Chapter #3 Verse #85. Any person who acquires peace by submitting his will to Almighty God, to Allah, he is called as a Muslim and this word

Muslim also occurs in several places in the Qur'an and the Sahih Hadith including in the Qur'an in Surah Al-Imraan Chapter #3 Verse #64 and Surah Fussilat Chapter #41 and Verse #33. Many people have misconception that Islam is a new religion, which came into existence 1400 years ago and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the founder of this religion. In fact, Islam is there since time immemorial. Since man set foot on the earth, and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not the founder of this religion but he is the last and final messenger sent by Almighty God, the last and final Prophet.

Let us first understand what are the sacred scriptures in these two great religions. In Hinduism, the sacred scriptures have been divided into 2 parts. The Shrutis and the Smritis. Shruti, in Sanskrit means that which is perceived, that which is understood, that which is revealed and the Shrutis are considered to be the word of God and they are more sacred than the Smritis. The Shrutis are further divided into 2 types, the Vedas and the Upanishads.

Veda is derived from the Sanskrit word vid, which means knowledge par excellence, it also means sacred wisdom.

Basically, there are 4 Vedas. This is the Rig-Veda, we have the Yajur-Veda, we have the Sama-Veda, and we

have the Atharva-Veda. There are 4 Vedas but there are difference of opinion regarding how old are the Vedas. According to Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj, he says the Vedas are 1310 million years old, but the majority of the Hindu scholars they say the Vedas are approximately 4000 years old. There is difference of opinions regarding where did the Vedas come into existence the first time.

There is also difference of opinion regarding who was the Rishi to whom the Veda was given the first time. In spite of these differences regarding the age of the Veda, the part in which it came first, to whom it was given; in spite of these differences, yet the Vedas are considered to be the most authentic of all the sacred scriptures of Hinduism, the most sacred amongst all the scriptures of Hinduism. If any other Hindu scripture contradicts the Vedas, the Vedas are supposed to be followed. The next in the authority we have, are the Upanishads. These are the Upanishads. Upanishad is derived from the Sanskrit word, *upa* which means near, nee means down, *shad* means sit, "sitting down near." When the pupil sat down near the guru to acquire knowledge, it was called as Upanishad. It is also called as knowledge which removes ignorance. There are more than 200 Upanishads, but the Indian culture puts the figure of 108 and people have picked up and compiled Upanishad known as principal Upanishad. Radhakrishnan has picked up 18 Upanishads and written

a Book "The principal Upanishads." Next type of the Hindu scriptures, we have are the Smritis. The word Smriti means to hear. It means to remember. It means memory. Smritis are less sacred than the Shrutis. They are not the word of Almighty God and they have been written by Rishis and by human beings.

They contain the creation of the universe, how a lifestyle should be lead by a human being on an individual level, on a community level, on a society level. They are also referred as the Dharm Shastra. There are various types of Smritis. We have the Puranas. Puranas means ancient.

Maharishi Vyas, he has compiled the Puranas into 80 voluminous parts. This is one of the Puranas known as The Bhavishya Purana. Then, we have the Itihas, the epics, there are two epics, the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. The Ramayan deals with, as most of the Indians know with the story of Sri Ram and the Mahabharat deals with the story it is a feud, a fight between the cousins, the Pandavas and the Kawrawas. It also deals with the story of Sri Krishna.

These are the 2 great epics. Then, we have the Bhagwat Gita. Bhagwat Gita is part of Mahabharath, it has 18 Chapters of Mahabharath from the Bheeshma Parv Chapter #25 to Chapter #42. It is an advice given by Sri Krishna to Arjun in the battle field. It is the most popular

and most widely read sacred scriptures amongst all the Hindu scriptures. Then, we have the Manusmriti and various others. This was in brief regarding the sacred scriptures of Hinduism; but the most sacred, most authentic amongst all the scriptures is the Veda. If anything contradicts the Vedas, we have to follow the Veda.

Let us discuss the sacred scriptures of Islam. The most sacred amongst all the Islamic scriptures it is the glorious Qur'an. The glorious Qur'an is the last and final revelation of Allah, Almighty God which was revealed to the last and final messenger, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Qur'an says in Surah Ra'ad Chapter #13, Verse #38 "li-Kulli ajalin kitaab" in every age have we sent a revelation. There are several revelations of Almighty God sent on the face of the earth, by name, 4 are mentioned in the Qur'an; the Torah, the Zabur, the Ingil, and the Qur'an; but there are various others like Suhufi Ibrahim; but all the scriptures that came, all the revelations that was sent by Almighty God before the last and final revelation of the glorious Qur'an, they were only meant for a particular group of people; and the message which they preached was supposed to be followed only till a particular time period. But because Qur'an is the last and final revelation of Almighty God, it was not sent only for the Muslims or only for the Arabs, it was sent for the whole of humanity. Allah says in the Qur'an in Surah Hijr

and in Surah Ibrahim Chapter #14 Verse #1, "Alif-Laaam Raa." We have revealed this Book to thee, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) so that thou may leadest the human kind from darkness to light. Not only the Muslims or the Arabs, but the whole of humankind. The same message is repeated that the Qur'an is for the whole of human kind in several Verses including Surah Ibrahim Chapter #14 Verse #52, Surah Baqara Chapter #2, Verse #185 and Surah Zumar Chapter #39 Verse #41 that the Qur'an was revealed for the whole of humankind.

The next scriptures in Islam are the Sahih Hadith. The authentic sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). There are many; one of them is the Sahih Al-Bhukari. We also have the Sahih Muslim.

The hadith of the Prophet, the authentic sayings and traditions are a commentary of the Qur'an. The complimentary to the Qur'an. They will never contradict the Qur'an. This was in brief regarding the scriptures in these two great religions.

Now, we will discuss the main talk "concept of God in Hinduism and Islam in the light of the sacred scriptures." What Dr. Zakir Naik says or what respected Sri Sri Ravi Shankar says or what any other human being says is not important; we have to see what do the sacred scriptures say about the concept of God in these 2 great religions. If

I say something or Sri Sri Ravi Shankar says something or anybody else say something, if it matches with the scriptures we have to agree. If we give any example, if it matches with the scriptures, we have to take it. If I say something and if it does not match with the scripture; if I give an example which does not match with the scripture, we have to reject it. First, we will discuss the concept of God in Hinduism in the light of the Hindu scriptures. If we ask the common Hindu that how many Gods does he believe in? some may say 3, some may say 100, some may say 1000, while others may say 33 crores, 330 millions. But if you ask a learned Hindu who is well Versed with his Hindu scriptures, he will tell you that in Hinduism you should believe and worship only one God. But the common Hindu, he believes in a philosophy known as pantheism, everything is God. The common Hindu believes that the tree is God, the sun is God, the moon is God, the human being is God, the snake is God. What we Muslims believe is everything is God's, everything belongs to God's, 'G' 'O' 'D' with an apostrophe 's'; the tree belongs to God, the sun belongs to God, the moon belongs to God, the human being belongs to God, the snake belongs to God. So the major difference between the common Hindu and the common Muslim is that the common Hindu says everything are Gods, we Muslim say everything is God's. The major difference is the apostrophe 's'. If we can solve this difference of

apostrophe 's', the Hindus and the Muslims will be united.

How would you do it? As the Qur'an says taAAalawila kalimatin sawa-in baynana wabaynakum (come to common terms as in us and you) which is the first term? allanaAAbuda illa Allaha (that you worship none but Almighty God). Let us try and understand what would the sacred scriptures of Hinduism have to speak about Almighty God. It is mentioned in the Chandogya Upanishad Chapter #6, Section #2, Verse #1; ekam evaditiyam God is only one without a second. It is a Sanskrit quotation. "I know that I am speaking in front of a great scholar of Vedas Sri Sri Ravi Shankar I am just a student. So if my Sanskrit pronunciation is a bit poor, I would like to apologize. He is a great scholar of the Veda, I am just a student of Islamic comparative religion as well a student of the Hindu scriptures and the Vedas. It is mentioned in Swethaswethara Upanishad, Chapter #6, Verse #9, Na casya kasuj janita na cadhipah, which means of him of Almighty God, there are no parents they have got no lord. Almighty God has no true father, he has no true mother, he has no true superior. It is mentioned in the Swethaswethara Upanishad; Chapter #4, Verse #19 Na Tasya Pratima Asti of that God there is no Prathima, there is no likeness, there is no image, there is no picture, there is no photograph, there is no sculpture, there is no statue. It is mentioned in Swethaswethara Upanishad;

Chapter #4, Verse #20; no one can see the Almighty God and it is further mentioned in Bhagwat Gita Chapter #7, Verse #20; all those whose intelligence has been stolen by material desires, they worship many Gods.

Some of the translation says that all those whose intelligence has been stolen by material desires, they worship idols and this quotation is also mentioned by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in his Book "Hinduism and Islam the common thread" in the section of not worshiping other Gods on page #3. He gives the quotation but does not give the reference. The reference is Bhagwat Gita Chapter #7 Verse #20. It is further mentioned in Bhagwat Gita Chapter #10 Verse #3, that they know me as the unborn not begotten, the supreme lord of the world. Amongst all the Hindu scriptures, the most sacred are the Vedas. It is mentioned in Yajur-Ved Chapter #32, Verse #3 *Na Tasya Pratima Asti* of that God there is no Prathima. Prathima as I said, means likeness, image, picture, photo, sculpture, statue. It is further mentioned in Yajur-Ved Chapter #40 Verse #8 Almighty God is imageless and pure. It is further mentioned in Yajur-Ved Chapter #40 Verse #9 Andhatma pravishanti ye asambhuti mupaste. Andhatma means darkness, pravishanti means entering, and Asambhuti means the natural things like fire, water, air. They are entering darkness those who worship the natural things like fire, water, air, etc and the Verse continues, they are entering more in darkness those who

worship the Sambhuti. The Sambhuti are the created things like tables, chairs, etc; who says that?

Yajur-Ved Chapter #40 Verse #9. It is further entioned in Atharva-Ved Book #20 Hymn #58 Manthra #3 Dev maha osi verily great is Almighty God; and amongst the Vedas, the most sacred is the Rig-Ved. It is mentioned in the Rig-Ved Book #1, Hymn #164, Manthra #46, ekkam sat vipra bhuda vidyante Truth is one, God is one, sages call him by various names. God is one but the saintly people call him by many names and there are no less than 33 names given to Almighty God in Rig-Ved Book #2 Hymn #1 alone. One of them is Brahma. The Brahma is called as the creator. If you translate creator into Arabic, it means khaaliq. We Muslims have got no objection if someone says that Almighty God is khaaliq or Creator, but if someone says this Almighty God has got 4 heads and on each head is a crown, you are giving an image to Almighty God. We Muslims take strong exception to it. More over, you are going against Swethaswethara Upanishad Chapter #4 Verse #19 which says Na Tasya Pratima Asti, of that God there are no images. The other name given to Almighty God in Rig-Ved, Book #2, Hymn #1, Verse #3 is Vishnu. Vishnu is called as the God who is the sustainer. If you translate Sustainer into Arabic, it is somewhat similar to Rabb. We Muslims have got no objection if someone calls Almighty God as Rabb or Sustainer, but if someone says he is Almighty God who

has got 4 hands and giving an image to Almighty God, in one hand is the lotus, the second hand is the conch, traveling on the sea on the bed of snakes, we Muslims take strong objection to it.

Moreover you are going against the Yajur-Ved, Chapter #32, Verse #3 which says Na Tasya Pratima Asti of that God there is no prathima. There is no likeness, there is no image, there is no picture, there is no statue, no sculpture. It is further mentioned in Rig-Ved Book #8, Hymn #1, Manthra #1 Ma chitanidi sansad worship him alone, one God, praise him alone. It is mentioned in Rig-Ved, Book #6, Hymn #45 Manthra #16, praise him alone, worship that one God and the Brahma Sutra of Hinduism is dvitiya naste neh na naste kinchan Bhagwan ek hi hai doosra nahi hai, nahi hai, nahi hai, zara bhi nahi hai. There is only one God not a second one, not at all, not at all, not in the least bit. So, if you read the Hindu scriptures, you shall understand the concept of God in Hinduism in the light of the sacred scriptures.

Let us understand the concept of God in Islam. The best reply anyone can give you from the scriptures is quote to you Surah Ikhlaas, Chapter #112 Verse # 1 to 4 which says Qul Hu-wallaahu Ahad (say he is Allah one and only) Allaahus-Samad (Allah the absolute and eternal) Lam yalid, wa lam yuulad (he begets not nor is he

begotten) walum yakul-la-Huu kufu-wan ahad (there is nothing like him).

This is a 4-line definition of Allah subhaanawa thaala, of Almighty God given in the Qur'an. If any person says so and so candidate is God, if that candidate fits in this 4line definition, we Muslims have got no objection in accepting that candidate as God. The first is Qul Huwallaahu Ahad (say he is Allah one and only) God is only one without a second. ekam evaditiyam Chandogya Upanishad Chapter #6, section #2, Verse #1. The second is Allaahus-Samad (Allah the absolute and eternal) same as Bhagwat Gita Chapter #10 Verse #3, they know me as unborn not begotten without a beginning, supreme Lord of the world. The third test is Lam yalid, wa lam yuulad (he begets not nor is he begotten) same as Swethaswethara Upanishad Chapter #6 Verse #9 Na casya kasuj janita na cadhipah of him there are no parents, no lords. Almighty God has got no mother, has got no father, he has got no superior. The fourth test is walum yakul-la-Huu kufu-wan ahad (there is nothing like him). Swethaswethara Upanishad Chapter #4, Verse #19, Yajur-Ved Chapter #32 Verse #3 Na Tasya Pratima Asti of that God there is no prathima, there is no likeness, there is no image, there is no picture, there is no statue. If any person says so and so candidate is God, if that candidate fits in these 4-line definition which we discussed of the Qur'an and the Hindu sacred scriptures, I have got no objection accepting

that candidate as God. For example, there are many human beings who consider Bhagwan Rajneesh to be God. Once, during question and answer time, there was a Hindu brother who told me, brother Zakir, we Hindus do not believe Bhagwan Rajneesh as God. I told him I have never said the Hindus believe Bhagwan Rajneesh to be God, I have read the Hindu scriptures, no where in the Hindu scripture does it say that Bhagwan Rajneesh is God.

I said some human beings, some people believe Bhagwan Rajneesh to be God. Many people believe him to be God. Let us put this Bhagwan Rajneesh to the test of Surah Ikhlas and the test of the Hindu sacred scriptures.

1. Qul Hu-wallaahu Ahad (say he is Allah one and only) ekam evaditiyam God is only one without a second, was Rajneesh only one, was he the only human being who has claimed to be God. There are many who have claimed, especially in this country of ours, thousands of men have claimed to be God, he is not the only one, but a Rajneesh bhakth may say, no he is unique. Let us do the second test.

2. Allaahus-Samad (Allah the absolute and eternal) when we read the autobiography of Rajneesh, we find mentioned there that Rajneesh was suffering from asthma, from chronic back ache, from diabetes mellitus. Imagine

Almighty God suffering from chronic back ache, asthma, diabetes mellitus.

3. Lam yalid, wa lam yuulad (he begets not nor is he begotten) we know Bhagwan Rajneesh was born in Madhya Pradesh, he had a mother and father, he goes to America(USA) in 1981 and takes thousands of Americans for a ride; and in the state of Oregon, he starts his new village called as Rajneeshpuram. Later on, the American government arrest him and they put him behind bars and Rajneesh alleges that American government gave him slow poisoning. Imagine Almighty God being slow poisoned. And In the year 1985, the American government removes him from the country, kicks him out, he comes back to India, and goes back to the city of Pune to his center which is today called as Osho Commune. If you go there, it is mentioned there on his tomb stone Bhagwan Rajneesh "Osho" never born, never died, but visited the earth from the 11th of December 1931 to the 19th of January 1990. Never born, never died but visited the earth from the 11th of December 1931 to the 19th of January 1990. They did not mention on his tomb stone that he was not given visas to 21 different countries of the world. Imagine Almighty God coming on this earth to visit the world and requires visas. The arch bishop of Greece said if you do not remove Rajneesh out of this country, we will burn his house and the house of his disciples.

4. The last test walum yakul-la-Huu kufu-wan ahad, it is so stringent that no one beside the true God will pass. The moment you can compare God to anything in this world, he is not God. Walum yakul-la-Huu kufu-wan ahad. We know that Bhagwan Rajneesh like normal human beings, had 2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 hands, 2 legs, white beard. The moment you can compare God to anything in this world, in this universe, he is not God, walum yakul-la-Huu kufu-wan ahad. If some says that Almighty God is a 1000 times stronger than Arnold Schwarzenegger. You might have heard the name of Arnold Schwarzenegger, the person who got the title Mr. Universe, the strongest man in the Universe. The moment you can compare God to anything in this world, whether it be Arnold Schwarzenegger or Dara Singh, or King Kong, whether it be a 1000 times or million times, the moment you can compare God to anything in this world, he is not God, walum yakul-la-Huu kufu-wan ahad, there is nothing like him. This was, in short, the 4-line definition of Almighty God. I call it the litmus test for theology for the study of God.

Otherwise, the Qur'an says in Surah Isra Chapter #17 Verse #110, Qulid-ullaaha awid-ur-Rahmaan; ayyammaa tad-uufalahul – Asmaaa ul-Husnaa. (Say: call upon him by Allah or by Rahmaan, by whichever name you call upon him to him belongs the most beautiful name. You can call Allah by any name but it should be a beautiful name and a

name which he has called himself and this is mentioned in no less than 4 different places in the Qur'an besides Surah Isra Chapter 17 Verse #110, it is also mentioned in Surah A'raaf Chapter 7 Verse #180, Surah Ta Ha Chapter #20 Verse #8 and Surah Al Hashr Chapter #59 Verse #24 that to Allah subhaana wa thaala belongs the most beautiful names and there are no less than 99 different attributes, names, given to Allah subhaana wa thaala in the Qur'an and the Hadith. For example Ar Rehmaan, Ar Rahiim, Al Kariim, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Most Wise and the crowing one is Allah. Why do we Muslims prefer calling Allah by the Arabic word Allah instead of the English word God. Because a person can play mischief with the English word God which he cannot do with the Arabic word. If you add 's' to God, it becomes 'Gods', the plural of 'God.' There is nothing like plural Allah, Qul Hu-wallaahu Ahad (say he is Allah one only). If you add 'dess' to 'God', it becomes 'Goddess', meaning a female God, there is nothing like male Allah or female Allah in Islam. Allah has got no gender. If you add a father to 'God', it becomes 'Godfather'. He is my 'Godfather', he is my guardian, there is nothing like Allah father or Allah Abba in Islam. If you add a mother to God, it becomes God mother. There is nothing like Allah mother or Allah Ammi in Islam. Allah is a unique word. That is the reason we Muslims, we prefer calling Allah with the Arabic word Allah instead of the English word God because a person can play mischief with the English word God. But when

any Muslim is speaking to the non Muslim, who may not understand the meaning of Allah and uses the English word God like what I am doing today, I have got no objection but I would like to mention that God is not the appropriate translation of the Arabic word Allah and this word Allah is mentioned in the scriptures of all the major world religions including Hinduism. It is mentioned in Rig-Ved Book #2, Hymn #1, Verse #11, one of the names of God is given as Allah.

Allah is also mentioned in Rig-Ved, Book #3, Hymn #30 Manthra #10 and also in Rig-Ved Book #9, Hymn #67, Manthra #30, there is a separate Upanishad by the name of AllOpanishad which is also mentioned in one of the books of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar a separate Upanishad, that is AllOpanishad. This was in brief regarding the concept of God in Islam according to the sacred scriptures of Islam.

This was in brief regarding the synopsis of the concept of God in Hinduism and Islam in the light of sacred scriptures and there was my talk on this topic just for few hours. I had initially prepared a synopsis of 50 minutes, but on the request of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. I was supposed to speak second and he was supposed to speak first. He requested me to speak first, I said no problem. Give me 10 minutes after that and the format was changed. He requested me to speak first because he wants to know my

views, he said I would like to know your views. So it is obligatory on me since it is a dialogue that I give my views regarding whatever little bit I have read of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. Many things what he says, I agree with him totally.

Many things I disagree. While I give my views on the comments of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar on this topic, especially talking about concept of God in Islam and Hinduism, I may differ. My intention is to let all the Hindu and Muslim brothers and sisters understand the correct concept in these 2 great religions. My intention is not to hurt anyone's feeling and I am sure Sri Sri Ravi Shankar will not mind if I differ with some of his views. It is my duty as a student of Islam and comparative religion, if I find something what they have spoken about Islam or something what I have knowledge about Vedas, if I differ I have to present it, and this is what is the dialogue for; but the main purpose is to understand and let the followers of these 2 great religions come together like what we have done today. Imagine it is a historic event, tens of thousands of people here. The first time I heard Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, was 1 week ago, when I saw his VCD on the topic of conversation with the spiritual master. He gave a talk on May 7, 2002 in Santa Monica in California and the first sentence I heard from Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was Spiritual path demands 2 things; first, authenticity, how authentic are you?; second, intensity, and

believe me when I heard this statement spiritual path, first thing demands authenticity, I was impressed. I totally agree that spirituality demands authenticity, whether first, second, or third, it does demand authenticity. It demands truthfullness, without authenticity how can a person be spiritual? I totally agree with respected Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Later, I was given a few of his books by the organizers and read one of the books Hinduism and Islam, the common thread; and when I read the Book, I am sure that the intention of respected Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was mainly (this is a Book Hinduism and Islam, the common thread) the main intention was to get the Muslims and Hindus together. Even I have written a book "similarities between Hinduism and Islam," so as far as that topic is concerned we share a common platform; but there were some things or rather many things which I found in the book which were not authentic, mainly, especially concerning Islam and it is my duty to present the views. It is just for us to understand and come closer. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar writes in the first section, faith in one God on page #2, Hinduism is perceived to be a religion of many Gods but contrary to this perception, it believes in one God. I agree with him 100% that is what I present in my talk.

He further continues and says it believes in advaitha non-dual monotheism. Though seven colors make up a

rainbow, it comes from one ray of white light, one white light. Similarly, 33 crores of devis and devathas, God and Goddesses are rays of one paramathma super human being, intelligent. To compare, this 7 colors make up rainbow of one light with 33 crores of devi and devathas come from rays of one paramathma, I find it a little bit illogical because I being a medical doctor and student of science also. We know the science says that light is made up of 7 colors, "VIBGYOR" violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red, but each color by itself is not white light. All the 7 colors in the right proportion make up one white light. Each individual color is not white light; and if any one of the color is missing, it will not constitute pure white light. To say this and give the example to 33 crores of devi and devathas, rays of one paramathma, it is like saying that one Almighty God has got 33 crores components like how a human body has got approximately 11 parts; 2 legs, 2 hands, one head, one neck, 2 shoulders, one chest, one abdomen, one pelvis; but each part does not make up the complete human body. All the parts put together in the right position makes up the complete human body.

If anything is missing, it is not a complete human body. To give this example to 33 crores of equivalent to one God, is saying that God has 33 crore parts, which I disagree and if any one part is missing then that will not be complete one God. But he further goes and says that

God has got 108 names, one God has got 108 names or 1008 names which I agree with him; this is what the Veda says, as I mentioned in my talk in Rig-Ved, Book #1, Hymn #164, Manthra #46, God is one, truth is one, saints call him by variety of names and then he goes on to say this is similar in Islam that in Islam God has got 99 names which I agree with him. As far as names are concerned like in Hinduism you can give any name, is Islam also you can give any name which Almighty God has called himself with and there are no less than 99 names given to Almighty God in the Qur'an and the Hadith.

Giving a name, I totally agree, Islam as well as Hinduism. For example, my name is Zakir Abdul Karim Naik. You can even call me Abu Fariq Zakir Naik, the father of Fariq Zakir Naik. You can even call me Abu Zikra Zakir Naik, father of Zikra Zakir Naik or father of Rushda Zakir Naik, four different names but all pointed to the same person, all are unique, only pointed to me and no one else. So giving names is totally correct as the Veda says as the Qur'an says, as long as the name is beautiful name and the name which Almighty God prefers calling himself with. Further in the section #3 of modes of worship on page #3, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar gives an example in his Book a picture of a person is not the person, a visiting card of a person is not the person; similarly, the idol is the symbol of chaitanya, consciousness, and divinity. I totally agree

with the first part that the picture of a person is not the person, the visiting card of the person is not the person. But further saying that the idol is the symbol of divinity, I think with my limited knowledge it is against the Vedas in Yajur-Ved Chapter 32 Verse #3, Na Tasya Pratima Asti "of that God there is no prathima, no likeness, no image, no picture, no photo, no statue, no sculpture" neither is idol the visiting card of God because visiting card gives the address of the person, his place of work, or his place of his residence; to say this is a visiting card is limiting the place of Almighty God. Even if I agree for the sake of argument that the idol is the symbol of God, is a picture of God or the visiting card for sake of argument. Suppose a person promises me some financial assistance and after few days his secretary gives me the money he had promised along with the visiting card, it will be illogical for me to thank the visiting card of the person or to thank his photograph if I see it somewhere else; the least I can do is at least I can call him up personally and thank him on the telephone. So, even if I agree for the sake of argument the idol is the photo of Almighty God, or the visiting card, which I do not agree but for the sake of argument, yet it is illogical to thank that photo, the visiting card, or the idol; and this is agreed upon by majority of the Hindu scholars that idol worship is wrong in Hinduism. What they say, that at a lower level, at a lower consciousness, person at a lower level who do not know, may require an idol to worship God but when you

reach a higher consciousness idol is not required and this is what even Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has mentioned in some of his VCDs which I saw. At a higher level of consciousness, you do not require an idol; at a lower level you require. If this is the understanding, I would say that we Muslims have already reached that high level of consciousness. We do not require to worship Almighty God in a image. Further more, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar writes in his book on page #4 that Islam strictly believes in the formless God but yet it acknowledges the symbol of this God in Mecca and Kaaba.

Though they believe that Almighty God is all pervading, but they worship in the direction of Kaaba and he goes on to say that means they are worshiping the formless through the form. To say that the Muslims worship Allah subhaana wa thaala, through the form of Kaaba, is totally wrong. It is not mentioned in any of the scriptures of Islam either in Qur'an or in Sahih Hadith. No Muslim ever worships the Kaaba neither does he worship Almighty God through the Kaaba, it is prohibited. Allah says in the Qur'an in Surah Baqara Chapter #2, Verse #144 that where ever you are, you face in the direction of the sacred mosque, direction of Kaaba, Kaaba is our Qibla, it is our direction, and we believe in unity, if we want to offer salah which direction do we pray in the north, south, west, or east?. So for unity, we pray in one direction that is direction of the Kaaba, it is our Qibla;

and when Muslims drew the world map, the first person was al-Idrisi in 1154. He drew with the south pole on the top and north pole down and the Kaaba was in the center.

Later on, the western cartographers came and they turned the map upside down, north pole top and south pole down, yet the Kaaba was in the center. So if you are in the north you face towards the south, if you are in the south you face towards the north, if you are in the east you face towards the west, if you are in the west you face towards the east. When we go to Mecca, and circumambulate round the Kaaba in Umrah and Hajj, it is because of the commandment of Almighty God, but logically I can think we circumambulate because every circle has got one god indicating that God is only one. So to say that we worship the formless through the form is a great error as far as Islam is concerned.

Further, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar writes on page #26 that Prophet Muhammad when he came back to Mecca, he destroyed all the idols in the Kaaba except the central object of worship the black stone. To say that black stone was the central object of worship is totally an error, it is unauthentic. You will not find any authentic record not any Islamic scriptures, any historic authentic records that black stone Al-hajar Al-aswad was ever worshipped by any of the idolaters in any age of Arabia. And Sri Sri Ravi Shankar writes on page #6 and he says that the Hindus

and the Muslims before they offer their prayers, they wash the hands and feet and this was prevalent as a vedic practice in Arabia which was picked up by the Muslims. It has no roots, it is no where anywhere mentioned in the Judeo-Christian traditions. I do agree Hindus and the Muslims wash the hands and feet before offering prayers. Some of the Hindus do that, I have no disagreement, but to say that it was picked up as a vedic culture from Arabia and has no roots in Judeo-Christian tradition, I feel is wrong because I am a student even of the Bible. It is not only mentioned in the Old Testament, it is even mentioned in the New Testament. It is mentioned in the Bible in the Old Testament in the Book of Exodus Chapter #40, Verse #31 and 32 that Moses and Arron, they washed their hands and feet before they appeared in front of the lord as they were commanded. It is mentioned in the New Testament in the Book of Acts Chapter #21 Verse #26 Paul along with the men, He washed before he appeared in front of the lord as was commanded. So, this is a part of the Judeo-Christian, it is part of the Bible, in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, which we call it as wudu that is ablution. As far as I being a student of Islamic comparative religion, I feel that the best book dealing with the Art of Living, it is the glorious Qur'an; and I would like to present an English translation of the glorious Qur'an to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Most of the religions except Islam, the followers of most of the religions except Islam, they believe in the concept

of anthropomorphism that Almighty God taking forms including human form. Some religious followers believe God Almighty took human form once, some many times and they have a logic that Almighty God is so pure, it is so holy, he does not know the short comings of the human beings, he does not know how do the human beings feel when he is angry, when he is sad, when he is hurt; so Almighty God became a human being and came in this world to know what is good or what is bad for the human being.

On the face of it, it is a very good logic; but I say that if I manufacture a tape recorder do I have to become a tape recorder to know what is good or what is bad for the tape recorder? I do not have to become a tape recorder. I write an instruction manual that if you want to play the audio cassette, put in the cassette and press the play button; if you want to stop, press the stop button; do not drop it from a height it will get spoilt; do not immerse in the water it will get damaged. I write an instruction manual. So similarly, since Almighty God is the creator of the human beings, he does not have to become a human being to know what is good or what is bad for the human being. What does he do? He has to reveal an instruction manual; and the last and final instruction manual for the human beings is the glorious Qur'an. No one can write a better book on Art of Living than the Creator himself.

Therefore, I say that this book is the best book on Art of Living, it is the instruction manual for the human beings, the do's and dont's, how our life should be led. I would like to end my talk with the quotation of the glorious Qur'an from Surah An'aam Chapter #6 Verse #108 which says that revile not those Gods who they worship besides Allah, lest in the ignorance they will revile Allah subhaana wa thaala. Allah says abuse not, revile not those Gods who people worship besides Allah, lest in the ignorance they will revile, they will abuse Allah subhaana wa taallah. waakhiru daAAwahum ani alhamdu lillahi rabbi alAAalameena.

Part I of the talk by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

OM namaH praNavArthAya shuddaGYAnaikamUrtaye nirmalAya prashAntAya daxiNAmUrtaye namaH.

Dear brothers and sisters, there is a saying of Kabir that comes to my mind, "poothi pad pad jug mua pandit bhayanakoyi dhaai akshar prem ki pade so pandit hoi." You can read all the scriptures in the world and argue and counter argue but we do reach no where but true message of love, belongingness, a sense of understanding beyond the words alone can unite us. It was wonderful to hear Dr. Zakir, he so scholarly he read about all the Upanishads and everything and I wish every single citizen in the world reads all this knowledge at least a little bit so that their mind is not so narrow. They do not think only I go to heaven and everybody else goes to hell. Today, the world is a hell because people think only their path is right path.

Every other path is wrong path. We need a broader understanding. I also thank Dr. Zakir, I know there are some mistakes in that book. I would have told him before also; this Book was printed in an emergency, in urgency, when there was riots in Gujarat. I wanted this book to immediately go. I did not go to big scholars because I do not know much about Qur'an. I myself not a big scholar but the intention he caught behind that is to bring people together. So that the Hindus respect the Muslims, and the

Muslims feel a sense of brotherhood and belongingness to the Hindus. So, I am happy that though with the mistakes, which he has already pardoned me, he has accepted the intention behind it. You know, intention is what we need to see. Sometimes you know, the mother says to the child "get lost." She really does not mean; but if you hang on to the word, my mother told me "get lost," I am going to "get lost," you are causing pain to the mother also. Maharshi Naarad who is the proponent of love, the Bhakthi Sutra, he said one sutra waadonawa lambiah (do not depend on the logic or arguments).

Argument does not take you any further. Today, within one religion, there are so many arguments. Because everyone thinks they are right. In Hindus, there are so many schools of thought each one fighting, everyone says I am the right. In Islam same thing the Shias and Sunni conflict and Ahmadias. One Buddha was there, today there are 32 sects of Buddhism. Different interpretation and everyone claims their interpretation is the correct. I would appeal to every single human being, take all that is common we all can live together as brothers and sisters. We can appreciate each other. A century ago, a decade ago, we thought about tolerance. I tell you today tolerance is a very feeble word. Today, not just tolerance, today the world should be loved. You tolerate something you don't like. If you do not like certain things, you say "Oh I

tolerate this." Tolerance of religion is not necessary today, it is old. Today, love each other's religion.

I want to tell you an event that happened. Once I was in Delhi, I was going in the car and there were elderly people whom I was dropping them to Cannaught Place but then they had to wait and take a Taxi back or an auto back, I gave them my car and I got out with my assistant and we took an Autorickshaw. So, I sat in that Autorickshaw and the driver was so humble, so beautiful soul. On either side of me there were some pictures of the actors and actresses. He told me Guruji maaf karna. Mai yahaan jiska thasveer lagaana chahtha hoon, uska koyi chahra hii nahi hai. Isiliye in logoan ka lagaaya. (Sorry Guruji, The persons' picture I wanted to hang here, does not have a picture at all, that's why I have hung these peoples' picture) Little further, he says Guruji, aaj kya hamara bhagya hai, wo hamara mehmaan banke gaadi mei ayaa hai our wahi chala bhi raha hai gaadi. Mana dhar deewar darpan bayojith dekhuoo jith thoye, kankad pathar sab jage wahi hai. Koun kahtha hai khuda nazar nahi aatha. Diwano se poocho khuda ke siva aur kuch nahi nazar na aatha. This is the essence seeing love. See, if you say, I do not appreciate the painting but I will appreciate the painter, you are not really 100% appreciating the painter. You appreciate the painter and you will also honor and appreciate the painting. So this whole world is God's.

In the Upanishad as our Dr. Zakir saab said there are other verses which if he goes little deeper he can find , having created that he has entered that. He lives in every heart of every human being. Sufi saints in this country have sung on this. Bulleshah has sung. Tu maane ya na maano, dil daar thumne mai khuda maana, this is the language of not the professors but the lover of God. And I tell you it is only through love you can reach the ultimate. You can experience the truth, the reality. What is the concept of God? It is sathyam, gyanam, anantham, brahma; truth, infinity, knowledge, the bliss, that is what is Brahma. You have already heard from our doctor professor, about the Upanishads and how the Vedas and the Upanishads are very similar; but the practices are many different where we are similar, we anyway shake hands, but where there is difference there also you shake hand, I tell you then you are really a human being because you love harmony in diversity.

You love people of all traditions, whether Buddhism, Jainism, or Sufism, or any school of philosophy. Love should be the supreme. In the vedic concept of God, it is said, the whole Universe is made up of asthi, bhathi, and preethi. Asthi means it is, bhathi it expresses, and preethi, it is love. Naama roopam, "name and form." The world is all name and form but the consciousness is asthi, it is bhathi, it expresses as it is expressed in the Gita, it has expressed the truth in the Vedas in the hearts of the

Rishis. It has expressed in the Holy Qur'an, and it is expressed in the Bible. It has expressed, it has brought into light asthi, bhathi, preethi, naama roopam jagath. This whole world is the name and form.

You know, when I went to Pakistan, they asked me the same question. Why in India you worship so many Gods and Goddesses. There is only one God, even you say one God. I told them you know; there is only one aata (dough), one chapathi, in that you make samosa, you make poori, you make kachori, you make parata. Why? just the fun of it, just the joy of it. So it is called as a leela Ekuham bahusyama. I am one, but in many. In every heart, in every human being, there is one consciousness but with so many differences. This is the whole concept. If you really go deep into it, there is no differences. Otherwise Kabir and guleshan and people, many sufi saints and rishis, maharshis, they never had difference of opinions; sab sayaane ek math. All those who love God, who have experienced God have no difference of opinion because it is pure love, and this is what today we need to do. Otherwise waada, vivada, argument, right, wrong, takes us so far way form innocence. Bhole bhaava mile raghurai and every child has this innocence. Every human being is born with the wisdom. It is natural to us all, don't you think so? what do you say? Am I correct? From the audience? You know sense of belongingness and everyone should learn about each other little bit little bit, I mean it

is a very great example. I am happy to see all those Books. I am sure many of the Hindus would not have read all of these Upanishads. We need to bring people together today in spite of the differences, different cultures, practices, habits, but remind them of the higher principle of one divinity, one love, one humanity. Do not hold on to the words but see the intention behind the words and that is what I call "Art of Living", broad vision.

Whether some one thinks you belong to them or not, from your side, you embrace everybody vasudhaiva kutumbakam every one belongs to me and we cannot convert the whole world into thinking in one line, in one philosophy, we need to live amidst diversity, honor each other, like each other, support each other. Satyam gyanam anantham brahma, the infinity is divinity, now I know we have the concept of 4 hands, 4 legs, you know chathur has 2 meanings in Sanskrit. Chathur means intelligent, the creation is intelligent, the action in the creation is intelligent, now Vishnu is seen as 4 hands and you know what is in 4 hands, the 4 elements and Vishnu is blue in color, he is only blue, means the space like akasha, he has no form, formless. Akasha thathva, agni thathva, jala thathva, wayu thathva, prithvi thathva, it is prapancha, this is called prapancha, 5 principles make this whole world, whole universe and the ancient people made this, no, one thing I also would like to mention here about the purana, we usually say purana means old, but in Sanskrit pure-

nava is purana that which is modern which is new in the city is called purana. So puranas are written where in all these forms are coming to inspire people, to bring some entertainment, joy, and kindle sense of feeling inpeople. Whatever people have understood and are following, I know many customs that people do are not right and each community has to look within and correct all that mistakes in their community somebody else cannot do it.

Hindu leaders should correct anything wrong in the Hindu community similarly Muslim leaders will have to take responsibility and correct anything wrong in the Muslim community; then, we can reform the society. I know reform is essential in every field. Non violence should be given most prominence, which is said in all the scriptures. If you ask me, is this table made up of atoms, I would say yes where can I find atoms, I would say find in the table, find in this one, in the speaker, and every thing is made of up atoms my dear. You do not have to look for atoms somewhere out. Sarva vyapi, it is present everywhere. A nuclear scientist, an atomic scientist will agree 100% with vedaantha, he will see the theory of relativity and the knowledge that the divinity is not a substance; it is not a person away from somewhere. He is a substratum by which every thing is made.

I would give one small story from the Upanishad. A boy asks the father, "father, what is god, how is god like?," the

father takes the boy by hand and tells the boy "look, this building is there, before this building, what was here?" the boy said "space." "Where is the building now?" "In the space." Once the building is destroyed what will happen to the space, he said nothing will happen to the space, the space will remain he said that is what is aathma that is how is your soul is, the being is, consciousness is, come, come, Brahma, it is like the space where in every thing is and every thing born and in which every thing dissolves. My dear child, and know that when you go deep into your heart yeto vacho nivatrante aprapte manasa saha where your words cannot enter, even your mind cannot enter, in that silent corner of your heart, sit in meditation, go deep in and realize, that is love, that is bhathi, that is as asthi, that is preethi. I think we all need to get together more and more. We cannot argue on our differences because no body will give their differences. If you tell someone why are you doing Ganesha pooja, he will not listen because he has feelings toward it. From centuries it is continuing. But if you listen to the Ganesha's shloka
ajaM nirvikalpaM nirAkAramekaM
nirAna.ndamAna.ndamadvaitapUrNam
paraM nirguNaM nirvisheShaM
nirIhaM parabrahmarUpaM gaNeshaM bhajema.

In the pooja it is said, you are formless, you are all over, but I would like to play with you for a little while. God, you are everywhere. Now I want to play with you. How

do I play? Whatever you did to me, I am going to do to you. You take sun and moon around you I am going to lit a little lamp, I am going to around you like this. You gave me water I am going to play with you, I am going to givewater. This is not to be taken serious, it is a play. It is a game, it is a joy, expression of joy, expression of gratitude. Pooja, as said that which comes from fullness. I feel so grateful for all that I have received in my life that I want to express myself.

Today, see when we came, you all gave me flowers, why you give flowers to somebody, just an expression of goodwill. Roshan Baigji came up and offered me flowers. Why? There is some feeling, guruji has come, I want to offer him some flowers and this is in exchange of feelings, because feelings cannot be expressed enough; so man finds some way to express it. Wahaan Mecca main jaake pathar maarthe hai shaytaan ko, wo kya ek feeling, shytaan door ho jao. These are rituals. You know Hindus can criticize that, Muslims can criticize Ganapathi, this will all cause more trouble, more problems, please do not go on that path. That is a request from my side. Do not criticize anybody's practices unless they come to you for knowledge. If they come to you, then you can tell them. Otherwise, people will defend what they are doing is correct and there is no way we can unite the people together, we can bring people together. I think this we should all remember. Do not criticize the idol worshipers,

because in this country thousands of years people have been doing worship. At the most, we have to respect what they are doing; and when we respect each other, we can bring about big transformation in the society. The confidence, trust comes in. No one thinks that you are against them. So, we need to bring people together and I see that is the real service that we do to God. Nonviolence should be our foremost, in the first, in the yogas, in the 8 limbs of Yoga.

You know if you read yoga pathanjali, yoga sutra, it is so secular, any religion can adopt yoga. Because exactly what definition you said about Allah is the definition of pathanjali maharshi about who is Eshwara; Kaaya klesha one who do not have any klesha, any suffering, any problem, one who do not have a body, that consciousness is Eshwara. The soothra of pathajali maharshi. So pathanjali maharshi says about yama, about ahimsa - nonviolence, sathya - truth, astheya - do not steal anything from anybody. Brahmacharya - abstinence, aparigraha - not abasing for oneself all the time. Yamas and niyamas, pranayama, prathyahara, dhyana, dharana samadhi, these 8 angaas are renunciated by Maharshi Pathanjali and it is beneficial for people world over. See your breath has so much to tell you. From your breath, you can make your body better, you can make your mind better, all the negative emotions in your heart just goes out. See if you sit for prayers, to do namaaz, your mind is all over the

place. But if you attend to your breath, your mind gets so focussed and you become so authentic and so friendly. People world over have undergone these breathing techniques, exercises, though it is an ancient technique where people would never teach them unless the student is really dedicated and worthy of teaching these lessons.

I

thought, this knowledge is so beneficial, it should go to all the people in the world, and everyone should get benefit of it, irrespective of their religion. I first opened the doors of pranayama and yoga to the world. I said does not matter what ever is your belief system you would learn about your breath because your breath and emotions are linked. By harnessing the breath your mind becomes so calm and serene and there are number of research work on the scientific studies are all done on this. All India Medical Institute, NIMHANS they are all doing. So, when we went to Iraq, there were thousands of women and children suffering, they cannot sleep in the night and doctors are giving them steroids and prozac just to sleep. We taught them simple breathing exercises, on second day you could see what a transformation happened. Thousands of them, they said we are able to sleep well, we are able to get over the trauma. Now in Kashmir it is happening, in Pakistan it is happening, so if there is good knowledge from any corner of the world in any religion it is good we adopt them, we do not be fanatic oh this is not

my religion this is not your religion, no good knowledge Unani comes though its source is very closely connected with Islam if I am correct. Unani medicine is good for everybody, similarly Chinese medicine acupuncture and acupressure world over people can do it.

I say when we accept food from every part of the world, technology from every part of the world; we use cars from any part of the world, music from any part of the world, why not we assimilate wisdom also. This globalizing wisdom is essential today, in the world, where there are torn between each other, I am happy the peace initiatives are taking up now in this big manner here, we all should come together every individual should learn a little bit about all the different religions in the world not saying my religion is better your's is little low, this is not acceptable because you can put any logic, this is called kutharka you know what is kutharka? There are 3 things, tharka, vitharka, and kutharka. Tharka is logic. Kutharka is saying if a door is half closed that means it is half opened. If a door is fully closed that means it is fully opened; this logic is called kutharka. We say a door is half opened means it is half closed but if you say it is half open it is half closed then if it is fully opened means fully closed this is not the logic, we should leave the kutharka aside. World has suffered a lot by kutharka. Honor the uniqueness of every tradition, every culture, and take what is good from them and make your life so beautiful, so loving that every one

comes to you and you feel that you are part of everybody; what do you say? There in the back?

So "dhai akshar prem ka pade so pandith hoi." Main to ithana hi jaantha hoon, I know only this much. I have considered everybody as part of my family; and knowledge is enormous, so much it s not just the books that are here, it is ocean even the story goes Vedavyasa wanted knowledge and then the Brahma showed him the mountain this is knowledge and how much you can take it, he took only 4 hand fulls and that became the Vedas. You know the stories are fascinating, it is nice. There are 2 things one is stories and another is thathva means knowledge behind them and it all leads to one thing let us get over our craving and aversions. Let us live a life full of love.

I would like to repeat that word again,

"Log kehatha hai khudha nazar nahi aatha, hum kehethe hai khudha ke siva kuch nazar nahi aatha".

For God is all love asthi, bhathi, preethi. Let us see the commonness in everything and celebrate our differences. We do not have to be the same in order to celebrate, we can be different and still celebrate and we honor each other. Let us keep this as our guiding light and let us teach

nonviolence to people. Violence is not sanctioned as far as I know in any religion. No religious scripture sanctions violence but we need to work on that. Is it not so? That is wonderful.(Have I exceeded my time or there is still time? Because I don't talk too much, here I have spoken too much. 33 minutes left?) Muskuraana seekhe, let us smile more and make our anger expensive. We are angry so easy and we smile very rarely so we need to shift our tendency smile more and make your anger very expensive get angry once in a while. I can say oh when there is injustice then I should get angry, okay baba but do not make anger your own nature. In the name of justice if you all get angry you know what happens we lose our perception our state of mind affects our perception, our observation and our expression. So, if your are stressed our perception is different if we are narrow minded our perception is wrong even when some one comes to greet you, you will they are all against you. So you need to change your perception that is why I tell even the worst criminal in their heart he is a beautiful person do not hate the criminal also. We brand him a criminal , you just talk to a criminal in his heart he is a lovely human being because of stress and tension, long understanding, he has committed a crime. We need to have that compassion, sense of belongingness.

So the concept of God is not somebody sitting out there and giving you some messages, he is what everything is. "Sarvam kalvidam brahma" everything here is brahman, is

made up of brahman, is brahmam, "sarvam thaluidam brahmam" everything in the universe is made up of atoms, his vibrations and vibration has no name, no form, yet, he is adored by many names and many forms and this is the wonderful, ancient knowledge that this country has produced, a timeless wisdom has come here and as Indians we are all very happy that we have this ability in harmony in diversity there are so many Sufi saints in this land who have rejoiced of course, many of them have been prosecuted in Iran and other places but this country recognized the Sufis, the Sufi saints and the saints, the rishis, maharshis and honor each other. That is why I said "maathru devo bhavo" see love of the divinity in mother, "pitru devo bhavo" see your father as divinity. Devo means what devo means it is not God as you understand deva means the light, your mother is your light, your father is your light they are bringing first lessons to you. So, a physicist would 100% agree with the Vedanta in fact they are doing a lot of work on that, the physics and the Vedanta as Dr. Zakir Naik may know that I do not know much as I said hum to dhai akshar waale hai sub ko gale lagaathe hai kuch maan ke chalo, kuch jaan ke chalo, prem se sub ko gale lagaathe chalo, prem se sub ko gale lagaathe chalo, jeevan ka yeh hum soothra banaale. Let us make this as our guiding light, let us understand some thing, we cannot understand everything in the world, you cannot read every scripture, let us understand some understanding, let us have our belief system, whatever

belief we have let us be strong in our belief, and let us in love greet each other and walk in our life together Rig Veda said in the last. Let us walk together, let us be together. With these few words I will finish my talk. I don't know how to take one whole hour !But I think I have made all the points that I wanted to say. Wonderful, nice being with you all. Thank You.

The Open Question and Answer Session

Question: My name is Mohammed Azimuddin Iliaz and I am a Dae, the one who conveys the message of Islam to others. My question to Sri Ravi Shankarji is Dr Naik had proved oneness of God and all the criterias of being God from Vedas and the Qur'an. Do you agree with this criteria of the Qur'an and the Vedas of God or not. I hope, I have conveyed the question to you.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: Yes, when the Vedas are quoted there is no disagreement at all, absolutely correct.

Question: Assalaam walaikum rahmathulli wa barakaathuhu Dr.Zakir My name is Sikander Ahmed Saigal and I am a business man. My question to you is that, what is your overall impression on the book of 'Hinduism and Islam - The common thread' by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in the light of sacred scriptures; because as my faith was, I was a Hindu before with my father, we reverted to Islam 20 years back. My father was a very good researcher in Vedas, Bible and all that, and Alhamdulillah we were guided to the true path, but that even I have followed and seeing your example like you, even I have started researching on books and one of those books which I have of Hinduism and Islam by his Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. I want to know, what is your overall impression, I find this book confusing,

sometime this and sometime that, it is confusing, what does he want to say.

Dr. Zakir Naik: The brother has asked a question that what is my opinion regarding the book of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and it is confusing. See we have to understand that the intention of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was good according to me.

I feel that he wanted to get the Muslims and the Hindus together and he wrote this book. We have to agree that he has agreed on stage that he wrote this book in a hurry and there are some errors which we have to respect that he is truthful about it. If you ask me to give all of my comments, it will take a few hours; but I did mention a couple of few of the points in the talk on Concept of God.

What I would like to mention that there are more of the traditions of Islam that were picked up rather than what is mentioned in the scared scriptures and authenticity. There were few points that I would like to clarify, that is, if you read in his book on page #6, he says that the word Ramadan has been picked up from the Sanskrit word Rama and Dhyaan; Dhyaan means to meditate and Rama means to shine in the heart. So, Ramadan according to him is picked up from the Sanskrit word which means it is

the month to meditate, which I being a student of comparative religion, disagree.

Ramadan is Arabic word which comes from the Arabic root word Ramada which means the earth becoming intensely hot due to the heat of the sun, and when the Islamic months were given, Ramadan fell on the ninth month, it was summer, that is how it got its name. To say it is derived from the Sanskrit word, I totally disagree. Similarly, there are certain examples that namaaz in Islam has been derived from the Sanskrit word namah which means to worship and yaja which means 'close to god,' so it means to worship. Again, the word namaaz is not an Arabic word. It is nowhere to be found anywhere in the Qur'an and the Hadith. The word for worship, mode of worship, the method of worship in Qur'an is Salaah. Namaaz is a Persian word, more used commonly in the Indian subcontinent. It is not an Islamic word. Namaaz in Persian means servitude. It is not an Islamic word neither an Arabic word. Further most, if we analyze, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, he mentions while describing that the word Kaaba has been derived from the Sanskrit word Garbha and Graha, in short Gaaba which as far as I could not find anything that Kaaba has been derived from that. Kaaba is an Arabic word which is derived from the arabic word Kaab which means bulging. Kaaba also refers to the four corners in a house, like kabatullah, a bulging 4-cornered

house. To say it is derived from the Sanskrit word Gaaba, I feel it is not authentic.

Furthermore, it is said that the Hajr-e-Aswad, the black stone which is there in the Kaaba, it is derived from sange ashwitha which means non white stone or shiva ling which again I disagree. Hajr-e-Aswad is derived from the Arabic word Hajr which means stone, aswad means black, black stone. To say it is like shiva ling again is not correct. It is Arabic word, has its own root and origin and further more there are various other things which have been mentioned in his book which again if you read, like if anyone has knowledge of Islam, will realize that the intention was good but if a person who has no knowledge reads it, he will start believing in it. For example, he says that in his book on page #11 in section #12 on cremation and burial..

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: I have already said that do not take that book as an ultimate to assess me this is not a place where I am not going to give justification. I told you see the intention behind that book. I may not be so scholarly, so my intention is to make an understanding between the Muslims and Hindus. The whole book is wrong, never read it don't worry about it, but see what I am saying is, see the goodness in every religion. You converting from one religion to another religion is not going to solve the problem. You do not have to become a Danish to eat

Danish cookies learn from everywhere at the same time do not go on pecking up on some which was done in a hurry in three days.

I myself can tell you more about other mistakes also in the book. I myself will tell you many mistakes in the book so the mistakes in the book let it be there, let it not get into our hearts and our mind. Do you understand what I am saying? Drop that book, no more discussion on the book. I myself know there are mistakes. That is why I did not print the 2nd copy, it was printed only once to make people come together; the purpose is that is all. It is not scholarly book at all, I have already written, and in the beginning also I said about it. If it serves some purpose to bring people together, well, otherwise, I tell you it is not perfect that too you do not have to peck on that, okay?

Dr. Zakir Naik: Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has agreed that he wrote in a hurry. We have to accept him as I said I don't suspect his intention. He said he will not take out the next print we agree with that and we thank him for that. As far as those who have knowledge on similarities in Islam and Hinduism, I myself have written a book on similarities between Hinduism and Islam and it is printed in large numbers, very shortly it will be printed in 100s and 1000s.

You are most welcome to avail of that copy and surely it will get the Hindus and Muslims together, with authentic quotations, will not hurt the feelings InshaAllah of any of us. Thank you very much.

Question: Assalaamualaikum, My name is Aasia Sameera Haseeb and I am quality assistants engineer lead with CISCO Systems. Well, my question is to Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji. He spoke a lot about love, desisting from converting other people and he also spoke about not using logic while trying to love each and everyone in this whole world. I totally agree with that but I just have one clarification which I would like him to answer. In this world, we are hearing so much about suicide bombing, terrorist attacks and what not. Now each of these person involved in these kind of heinous crime has an intention, so I must respect his intention, so as you told me love each and everybody, I must love this person and because you say do not use logic, I have no right to say that what you are doing is wrong. So, can you kindly please clarify this for me?

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: Yes, I never said do not use logic, please do not misquote. I said do not do kutharka, illogic I said wrong logic should not be used and it is not logic alone is not everything. Yes, you have to take care of the people who are terrorist, who are suicide bombers; they think they only have the truth. They have only right to

live and exist in the world. They have least tolerance and respect for other faiths, other religions, other people, they are so fanatics and that we have to attend to them. I am never saying do not use logic, but I am saying do not use logic to divide people. Do not use wrong logic to condemn somebody. We are not here to condemn people.

You know, even the worst criminals, when we are working in prisons, 125,000 prisoners have undergone our Art of Living Program, breathing exercise, Sudarshan Kriya. You should see the difference it has made in their lives. So, I would like to tell you that I am not against logic, I am not saying go illogically and do not educate them at all. No, I am not saying that. But in the name of logic do not disrespect other traditions. This is my sincere appeal to you.

Question: My question is to Mr. Zakir Naik, but first I would like to thank Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji for giving us such a valuable knowledge and with sharing his Art of Living and thank you for Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji. My question to Dr. Zakir Bhai is, is Prophet Muhammad (Salallahu-allehi-wasallam) prophesized in the sacred scripture of Hinduism?

Dr. Zakir Naik: The question posed by the sister is, is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) prophesized in the sacred scriptures of Hinduism? I would like to again

take the help of this book, but please Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji writes on 26th page of this book in heading Prophet Muhammad (Sal-allahu-allehi-wasallam). Prophet Muhammad prophesized in vedic scriptures and he gives reference bhavishya purana parva 3, khanda 3, adhyata 3, shlokas 5 to 6. Guruji, this reference is the only reference you gave in the full book and is authentic. It is totally correct. I agree with you totally. Under the section of Prophet Muhammad mentioned in the Vedic scriptures, Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji has quoted various verses of the Vedas but only one I verse has he given the reference that is the mention of Prophet Muhammad in the scriptures and he gives the reference bhavishya purana, parva 3, khanda 3, adhaithay 3, shlokas 5 to 6.

I would like to congratulate you Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji that what you mentioned here is 100% correct. I like to describe though the verse was not mentioned there the reference was give. If you read the bhavishaya puran parva 3, khanda 3, adhaithya 3, shlokas 5 to 8, it says that a Malechha will come, a foreigner, speaking a foreign language, non Sanskrit. He will come along with his companions, that is the sahabas and his name will be Muhammad and Raja Bhoj will welcome this person with great tribute and tell "Oh pride of human kind, Oh dweller of Arabia," the Sanskrit word is marusthal. This man will come from a sandy track, from a desert, and he will create a great force to destroy the evil. Muhammad

(Sal-allahu-allehi-wasallam) further mentioned in the bhavishya purana parva 3, khanda 3, adhaithya 3, shlokas 10 to 27 that almighty God says there was enemy who had been killed now he has been sent by more powerful enemy. I will send a man by the name of Muhammad to put this people on the straight track and "Oh raja you need not go to the land of pishachas, I will purify you through my kindness." A man of angelic disposition comes and says that eshawar paramathma has sent me to see to it that arya dharm, the religion of truth, is prevailed. I will enforce a creed of meat eaters. My follower shall be a person who is circumcised and we know that followers of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is circumcised. They will not have a tail on their head, that is the shindi. They will keep their beards. They will crate a revolution. They will give the call for prayer that is adhaan. They will eat all lawful animals but will not have the flesh of swine; and Qur'an says in no less than 4 different places, in Surah Al-Baqarah chapter #2 verse #173, In Surah Al-Maidah chapter #5 verse #3, In Surah Al-Anam chapter #6 verse #145 , In Surah Al-Nahl Chapter 16 verse 115 that you cannot have pork. It further says you shall not be purified by, they will not be purified by herbs and shrubs but by warfare, they will be called musalmaans. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has also prophesized in bhavishya purana parva 3, khand 1, adhyatha 3 shlokas 21 and 23. He is even prophesized in the atharva ved, book #20 Hymn #127,

verse #1 to 14 which is called as kuntap Suktas. Kuntap means the hidden glands. The meaning will be known later on. Time does not permit me to say everything but the first verse says that he is Narashangsa, one who is praiseworthy.

He is Kaurama, the prince of peace or one who has migrated. He will be protected from 60090 enemies. All these are pointing towards Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. He is even prophesized in Atharvaveda Book 20, hymn 21, verse 6, the battle of Ahzab. In Atharvaveda Book 20, hymn 21, verse 7 saying that he will defeat the twenty chiefs, approximate chiefs, that were there at that time in the Mecca. He is also prophesized in Rigveda Book 1, Hymn 53 verse 9. He is prophesized in Samveda Agni, mantra 64 saying, he will not have the milk of his mother. And we know that the Muhammad (Sal-allahu-allehi-wasallam) was not breastfed by the mother. He is prophesized as "Ahmed" that means the one who praises, that is the other name of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) In Samveda Uttararchika, mantra 1500 In Samveda Indra chapter 2 verse 152 He is been prophesied in Yajurveda chapter 31 verse 18, as Ahmed In Atharvaveda Book 8 hymn 5 verse 16 In Atharvaveda Book 20 hymn 126 verse 14 In Rigveda Book 8 hymn 6 mantra 10.

He is prophesized as 'Narashangsa', 'Narashangsa' in Sanskrit means Nar - means a man, a human being. 'Aashangsa' means 'praise worthy', A man who is praise worthy. Which is the meaning of the word Muhammad (Salallahu-allehi-wasallam). So Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) in Sanskrit 'Narashangsa' is prophesized in several places.

Rigveda Book 1 hymn 13 verse 3
Rigveda Book 1 hymn 18 verse 9
Rigveda Book 1 hymn 106 verse 4
Rigveda Book 1 hymn 142 verse 3
Rigveda Book 2 hymn 3 verse 2
Rigveda Book 5 hymn 5 verse 2
Rigveda Book 7 hymn 2 verse 2
Yajurved chapter 29 verse 27
Yajurved chapter 20 verse 57
Yajurved chapter 21 verse 31
Yajurved chapter 21 verse 55
Yajurved chapter 28 verse 2
Yajurved chapter 28 verse 19
Yajurved chapter 28 verse 42

I can go on and go on.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: That is good. So you all have to respect the vedas now. The Doctor himself has said. Everyone has to respect the Vedas do not think of it as

the book of the Kafirs or Non Believers. So every Muslim should respect all that is Indian I am very thankful to Dr Zakir for bringing up this point and telling even that the Vedas are teaching the same knowledge and humanity and love for all humanity. Thank You.

Question: Assalamualaikum, I am Syed Moinuddin Shabbir working for MS Ramiah Medical College and Hospital as a Lab manager. I have a question to Sri Sri Guru Ravi Shankar I listened to his talk which is very impressing he said we have to love all the religions. But if you see the latest terrorist attack in Indian Institute of Science which I am the eye witness. At MS Ramiah hospital on that night. One of the eye witness presented to the media that I am not seen the person who was the shooted at the site. It was around 7:45 PM that no body has seen nor the sculpture but the very next day in the Indian media they started criticising only Islam I want to ask a question to Sri Ravi Shankar, You said love all the religions, But why Indians are criticizing only Islam, in the name of terrorism?

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: Todays' topic is, 'The Concept of God'. What I would say is, See I cannot speak for Media, I cannot speak for the Government, I cannot speak for Police, I cannot speak for anybody else. Similarly, You cannot be the only spokesperson for any religion, One particular religion. Unfortunately today people are so

scared of terrorism and unfortunately it has been associated with Islam. Though it is not correct. But, the fact remains that this image you have to work to change. You have to change the image of Islam as being intolerant, and not accepting other religions, as more tolerant, as more peace loving religion. This image all this young youth and scholars here can do it and I wish you good luck in bringing up that new image to Islam. Thank You. And I think this is the first step. Today we have come together both Hinduism and Islam. Like this when we come together more and more and establish to the world that we all love peace and we respect each other and honor each others religion. Not condemn anybody.

Question: Assalamualaikum, I am Ayaz Qazi, My question is does God permit us Human beings to eat Non Vegetarian food in the scriptures of both Hindus and Muslims?

Dr. Zakir Naik: Brother has asked a question, Does God permit us to eat non veg food in the scriptures of Hinduism and Islam. As far as Islam is concerned a muslim can be a very good muslim even by being a pure vegetarian. It is not compulsary in Islam that you should have non veg. But Allah says in Surah Al-Maidah Chapter #5 Verse #1, that you are allowed to eat the meat of the lawful animals four footed with the exceptions named. Allah also says in Surah An-Nahl Chapter #16 Verse #5

and Surah Al-Muminun Chapter #23 Verse #21, that We have made cattle for you so that you may derive warmth from it and you can eat its meat.

So Almighty God has given permission to have. Having is not compulsory but if you wish you can have. And today science says that non veg food is rich in protein, its nutritious. And if we analyze the teeth of the herbivorous animals the cow, the goat, the sheep. They have got flat teeth. They only have vegetables they do not chew flesh. If you analyze the set of teeth of the carnivorous animals the lion, the tiger, the leopard. They have got carnivorous set of teeth, they have canine teeth, they have pointed teeth. If you analyze the set of teeth of the human beings they have flat teeth as well as pointed teeth. If almighty God wanted us to have only vegetables, Why did he give us the canine teeth? This is known as the omnivorous set of teeth. So Almighty God has made our set of teeth so that we can have both veg and non veg. Non veg includes veg. Non veg means vegetables and fresh fruits. Further more if we analyze the digestive system of the human beings can digest both veg as well as non veg. If you thrust down the mouth of a sheep, cow, goat non veg, any flesh food, it will not be able to digest.

Similarly the lion, the tiger, the leopard they will not be able to digest the vegetables. But the human being can digest both. It has got a long intestine to digest the

vegetables. But it can even digest the non veg, the flesh food. But there are certain flesh food we cannot digest, certain vegetables we cannot digest. But what we can digest we can have. And people have a misconception that Hinduism does not permit a person to have non veg food. It is mentioned in Manusmriti Chapter #5 Verse #30. That if you eat, that which is meant for eating, you are not doing a sin, because God created some to eat and some to be eaten.

It is mentioned in Manusmriti Chapter #5 Verse #31, That if you kill the animal in sacrifice, you are not doing a sin because God has created some animals for sacrifice. If you read the Mahabharat, Anushasan Parv, Chapter # 88, Yudhistir, the eldest bother of Pandav. He asked Bheeshm, that what thing we should give in Yagna, in Pooja so that our ancestors will be satisfied. So Bheeshm says, it is mentioned in Mahabharat, that if you give herbs and shrubs the ancestors will be satisfied for one month. If you give fish for two months. If you give mutton for three months.

If you give hare for four months. If you give the meat of goat for five months, if you give bacon for six months, if you give birds seven months, if you give deer eight months and the menu continues, that if you give buffalo eleven months, if you give beef one full year, and if you give meat of rhinoceros or red meat of the goat the ancestors will be

satisfied inexhaustibly. So the hindu scriptures give permission for the followers to have non veg food. But because of the influence of the other religions which believe in other things, many people became vegetarian and the logic of the others was that you should not kill any living creature so if you kill a plant you are killing a living thing therefore it is a sin.

Today, science has advanced and we have come to know that even the plants have got life. So now the logic has changed and people say that fine we agree that plants have got life but the plants cannot feel pain. So killing an animal is a bigger sin than killing a plant. Today, science has advanced and we have come to know that even the plants can feel the pain. They can cry, they can feel happy. So once there was person who argued with me and told me brother Zakir agree that plants have got life, they can feel pain, but the plants have got only 2 or 3 senses, the animals have got 5 senses, they have got 2 senses less. Therefore killing an animal is a bigger sin as compared to killing a plant. So I told him I agree with you for the sake of argument that plants have got less senses as compared to animals, may be they cannot feel pain etc, and then I asked a question that suppose I have a brother and he is born deaf and dumb, 2 senses less.

When he grows up, if someone comes and kills him, will I go and tell the judge, my lord give the murderer less

punishment because my brother had 2 senses less. In fact, I will say give the murderer a bigger punishment he has killed a masoom, he has killed the innocent. So Islam does not work whether you have 5 senses or 3 senses. Allah says whatever is good for you to eat, whatever is permitted you can have. As far as I am concerned, I have got no problem if someone is a pure vegetarian but if someone says eating non veg food is a sin then I argue. Otherwise, if people remain a vegetarian, it is good for us because if everyone in India becomes non vegetarian, then the price of meat will rise.

Question: My question is for brother Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. He said in his talk that violence is not sanctioned in any religion. If that is so, why did Krishna urge Arjun to fight, that too against his own brothers?

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: If you want to justify the fight, you will see that in every religion jihadis and in Christianity, Jesus says I have not to come make peace but to put the father against the son, and the mother against the daughter, let us not be misguided by these things. To Arjuna, Krishna says, you fight but not with anger, you fight for justice, you fight to establish Dharma, you are not going and killing innocent people being a suicide bomber and creating terror around the world. You be in the dharma, justice, and that is exactly the knowledge of Gita.

A warrior has to act. I am not saying policemen should sit in the back when there is a problem happening. Policemen have to come up when there is a riot and he has to protect the people, he is doing his duty. Arjuna was running away from his duty being a policeman, being a army person. He was not doing his duty so Krishna had to bring him to do his job. Please do not mistake that as advocating violence. Krishna never said, he said with your mind in me do not have anger or hatred towards anybody Adveshta sarva bhutanam maitrah karunayevacha why don't you look at that words. Don't hate anybody, any creature, have compassion and friendliness for everybody but you do your duty. I would request to you all, you know please do not have prejudice against any religion otherwise you know you go on giving me a question of that sort to prove how Arjuna is correct, prove why did Rama send Sita back home. All these things you know, it is a very deep thesis you have to study a lot I cannot answer in 1 or 2 words and this is not a place for debate, it is not a place to divide, it is to come together, honor each other, respect each other, and that is what I would say learn from the Gita there are so many beautiful things in it okay?

Question: Assalamualaikum, my name is Arshia Raza and my question is to Dr. Zakir Naik Saab but before I ask my question, I would just like to say that I have experienced the breathing techniques of Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji and the experience it has given me in terms of

the connection I have experienced with God and the communion which I would have never understood in concept. So I am very grateful for that. Dr. Zakir Naik Sahib, my question to you is in my understanding of Islam, one of the most important aspects about the concept of God is that he is omnipresent. Does that not mean that God is present in every atom, every molecule of this universe. I would like a clarification on that.
Dr. Zakir Naik: The sister has posed a question, according to her understanding it says that God is omnipresent, that means he is present in every atom, every molecule, what are my comments.

I am a student of the Qur'an. I do not know of any verse in the Qur'an which says that god is omnipresent neither do I know of any sahih hadith which says God is omnipresent, but I know there are different thinking of the presence of almighty Allah. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sal-allahuallehi-wasallam) said as far as this question is concerned do not argue too much on it but there was a lady who approached the Prophet and the prophet wanted to test her belief, her imaan, and he asked her where is God? The lady pointed out, he is on top so the Prophet said she is passed. I know there is a difference of understanding in different people but I do not know of any verse in the Qur'an or hadith which says God is

omnipresent. There is no name of Allah as omnipresent that I know of. Hope that answers the question, sister.

Question: Assalamualaikum wa rahmathulli hi wa barakathuhu. My name is Saadiq Bhai. I am a revert to Islam. If I should appropriately introduce myself for the glory of Allah wa thaala. In the year of 2005, January in the city of Chennai, Dr. Zakir Naik had a very massive meeting which by the Allah thaala's grace I was able to attend. There was enlightened the truth of tawheed and I was given a knowledge of who the true God is. I embraced Islam voluntarily, whole heartedly, without any coercion. See actually, when Dr. Zakir Naik was just giving his lecture he told about Vishnu and he that he is a sustainer. When you stood up to give about one hour the lecture, you said about Vishnu and you said about the five elements which fills up the whole of the atmosphere so on and so forth. Now, coming to the point, Vishnu sahasranaama says very clearly in Hinduism through which you yourself can give me an explanation.

shuklaambaradharaM vishhNuM
shashivarNaM chaturbhujam |
prasannavadanaM dhyaayet
sarva vighnopa.shaantaye ||
yasya smaraNa maatreNa
janmasaM saara bandhanaat |
vimuchyate namastasmai

vishhNave prabhavishhNave ||
|| oM namo vishhNave prabhavishhNave ||
shrii vaishampaayana uvaacha -
shrutvaa dharmaanasheshheNa
paavanaani cha sarvashaH |

I will just stop here.
Excuse me guruji, please give me the correct essence of the basic few lines that I have chanted from the Vishnu sahasranamam. If you can give me the clear essence, I am so confident right now at this spot our Allah's hidayat is upon you is also not so far away at all, not only on you also on your followers Assalamualaikum.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: I have all compassion for this youth who is wrongly quoting, who is lost, and he is thinking okay Allah is going to give me his blessings. My dear he has already blessed me, he is very close to me and he has given me sense to make understand for youths like you who are bringing bad name to Islam. You think you only know the truth, no body else know the truth. My dear child, wake up, respect, and all these scriptures are very deep and I know what you are saying, there is so much more in the knowledge go deep into it do not scratch on the surface and you have scratched on the surface and okay you might have been born in some family, with your will you have converted to Islam it is fine; but dismissing something and taking something else simply shows your

ignorance. It shows not your knowledge it shows how ignorant you are about the knowledge, about the concept of God in Hinduism.

So, I would tell you Vishnu sahasranaama if you have to learn it is a huge thing. Each word, you can write big big books on that but pothi pad pad jag mua pandith bhaya no koi ehise pundithon se tho nuksaan hi hotha hai jo thoda se pad lethe hai aur apne apko pandith jaanthe hai; dhai akshar prem ki pade so pandith hoi. Come into the knowledge and you would be of help, you would bring good name to the religion you are following rather than being fanatic and expect everybody to convert to what your faith or what your belief system is. This is not acceptable.

You cannot convert me in this lifetime because I have already converted from head to heart and many are needed to convert from head to heart. People have to sink into their heart, into their love, and experience wisdom rather than just quoting and talking and talking and live their head and create more and more problems in the society today. Let us all be dear human beings, dear lovely brothers and sisters who honor and respect and not criticize each other okay? Thank you.

Question: My name is Mohd Akil and I am medical technologist my question is during the lecture Sri Sri Ravi

Shankar quoted a verse of Vedas saying that refer to God. I am one but entered in many; so, how far you do you take it? If you do not take it, please narrate.

Dr. Zakir Naik: The brother asked the question that what are my comments on Sri Sri Ravi Shankar when he said that God is one and present in all that is what he meant. If what I understand what I heard from his talk, Qur'an says in Surah Al-Hijar chapter #15 and in Surah Sajdah chapter #32, verse #9 that Allah subhawaanathala has blown his knowledge in the human beings. So, the knowledge of Almighty God is present in all the human beings. So, if we have to combine and conciliate come to common terms what is mentioned in the Vedas and the Qur'an. As the Qur'an says Allah subhawaannthala, almighty God has put his knowledge that does not mean of a pantheistic form, it means that every human being has the knowledge of God in him. He may agree or disagree that is a different thing, but almighty God has put the knowledge of the true one god in every human being. Hope that answers the question.

Question: My name is Thanvir Fathima. I am doing my 1st year BDS from RGDC college. My question is for Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji. In Mahabharath it has been said that Abhimanyu heard how to get into chakrayvuh when he was inside the womb of his mother, but it has been proved

by the science that fetus cannot hear inside the womb what you have to say about it.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: Well, there are phenomenons, the world is full of mysteries, and we do not know. I am not a lawyer for Abhimanyu. So, if there is something good in it you take it if you think it is not possible, okay believe that way. May be in few years later you may find it is possible. Because, test tube babies were considered as not possible at sometime but Mahabharat time it is said that Kunti had put the same embryo in so many parts; and you know Puranas and Ithihasas you have to learn it, take it with what is in it, you know, you have to take it with a different tone because it is not a historic thing, everything in it, you have to understand in a different light. So there are many scientific things in the Mahabharatha and Puranas, we need a research. So far we have not done scientific research, much research into it and today that needs to be done. That is all I could say.

Question: I am Amina and I am a student I would like to ask the question that what is the concept of avtar in Hindu scriptures and who is Kalki avtar.

Dr. Zakir Naik: Before I reply to this sister, I would like to say that I am a medical doctor, and I would like to tell that a fetus can hear in the womb of the mother. By the 5^{th} month of pregnancy, the ears open up and Qur'an also

says in Surah Insaan chapter #76, verse #2 that Allah has given you the sense of hearing and sight. First comes hearing then comes sight. So, the ear starts in the 22nd day and the fifth month a person can hear. So, that is the reason research is done. Therefore it is said that when a pregnant woman is there, she should not see too much violent movie it affects the fetus. So, fetus can hear. So, I disagree with the sister earlier. As far as the question earlier, it is concerned that what is the concept of avatar and who is Kalki Avatar. Avatar in Sanskrit came from the word 'av' and 'tra' means coming down and the common meaning is of most of the common Hindus is the almighty God coming in this world in bodily form. But there are some scholars who say that the Sanskrit word avatar cannot be a possessive of God. It can be that God almighty has sent someone like a rishi etc; and this is the similar concept in the Qu'ran that almighty God chooses a man amongst men and communicates with them on a higher level who we call as messengers.

So, Islam believes in the concept of messengers and Allah says in the Qur'an in Surah Faatir, chapter #35, verse #24 that Allah says "Inna arsalnaka bialhaqqibasheeran wanatheeran wa-in min ommatin illa khalafeeha natheerun" (there is not a nation or a tribe to whom we have not a sent a warner). Allah says in Surah Ra'd chapter #13 verse #7 "walikulli qawmin hadin" in every age have we sent a messenger. So, if you read the Vedas,

the Vedas also talk that almighty God had sent many learned people, many rishis, and one of them is kalki avatar. It is mentioned in bhagawatha purana, khand 12, adhyaa 2, shlokas 18 to 20 that he will born in the house of Vishnu yash, the chief of the city of sambaala. His name will be kalki and lord will incarnate. It further says he will be given 8 supernatural qualities. He will ride a white horse with a
sword in his right hand and he will destroy the miscreant. It further mentioned bhagawatha purana khand 1, adhyaya 3, shlokas 25, that in kalyug when kings will be like robbers, in the house of vishnu yash, kalki will be born. It is also mentioned in kalki purana chapter #2, verse # 4, his father's name is Vishnu yash. It is mentioned in verse #5 chapter #2 of kalki avatar that he will have 4 companions to help him. In kalki purana, chapter #2, verse #7, he will be helped by devathas, by angels in the battle field. Kalki purana chapter #2, verse #11, he will be born in the house of Vishnu yash in the womb of Sumathi. Kalki purana chapter #2 versed #15 he will be born in the twelfth month of Madhav. In brief, you can give a talk on kalki avatar, in brief it says his father's name is Vishnu yash, that is the worshipper of God. The name of Muhammad (Sal-allahu-allehiwasallam) was Abdullah who is also a worshiper of God. His mother's name will be Sumathi, that means serenity which means peaceful. The mother's name of Muhammad (Sal-allahuallehi-

wasallam) was also Aamina which means serenity and peaceful. He will be born in the village of Sambaala.
Sambaala means a place of serenity and Mecca is also called as Daar ul Aman, a place of peace and serenity. It says he will be born in the house of the chief of village of Sambaala. We know Muhammad (Sal-allahu-allehi-wasallam) was born in the house of the chief of Mecca. He will be born on the twelfth month of Madhav. We know Muhammad (Sal-allahuallehi-wasallam) was born on the 12th of Rabia al awal. It says he will be the anthim rishi. He will be the last rishi. We know Muhammad (Sal-allahu-allehi-wasallam) as mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah Ahzaab chapter #33, verse #40 Ma kana muhammadun abaahadin min rijalikum walakin rasoola Allahiwakhatama alnnabiyyeena.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the seal of the prophets, the aakhri messenger. It further says that he will migrate, he will get the revalation, this person in a cave and migrate northwards and come back. We know that Muhammad (Salallahu-allehi-wasallam) got the first revelation in Jabal Al-Noor, in Gaare Hira, the mountain of light, then he migrated to Medina, northwards and came back. It says he will be given 8 supernatural qualities; the 8 mentioned here is: wisdom, self control, reveal knowledge, respectable lineage, valor, strength, at most charity, and Gratefulness and all of these 8 were found in Prophet Muhammad (Sal-allahu-allehi-wasallam). It

further says that he will guide the whole of humanity which is also mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah Saba chapter #34 verse #28, he was a messenger for the whole of the human kind. It further says that he will be given the white horse and we know that Muhammad (Sal-allahu-allehi-wasallam) was given the 'Buraq' white horse. He will carry the sword in the right hand.

Muhammad (Sal-allahu-allehi-wasallam) took part in battles, all of them, most of them in self defense and he even carried the sword in the right hand. It says he will be helped by 4 companions, talking about the four Khulfa-e-Rashideen; Hazrath Abu Bakr, Hazrath Umar, Hazrath Uthman and Hazrath Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all). It says that he will be helped by devathas and we know Muhammad (Sal-allahu-allehi-wasallam) was helped by angles in the Battle of Badr. In Surah Al-Imraan chapter #3 verse 123 to 125 and Surah Anfaal chapter 8 verse # 8 and 9. So all these prophesies point out to the last and final messenger Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Question: This is to Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji. Well, my doubt is on the anti theoretical ideologies in Hinduism. When in Islam we have got the Qur'an and the Sahih Hadith to check the authenticity of any belief or ideology and even the priests and pygambars in Islam follow them. But in Hinduism, we have got the priests and the upper

class and upper sections of Hinduism practicing such believes which are contradictory to the Vedas. You might say the Vedas with which the believes and ideologies have to be found whether they are compatible or contradictory, but then if the Vedas say eating meat is permissible, you have got the priest saying it is sinful. If the Vedas say God does not have any idol, picture, because of priests giving pictures. So how does a common man justify any ideology, how does the common Hindu feel which is proper, which is to follow and which is to be ignored. If you say ignore the priest and follow the scriptures; but if the priests themselves are mislead, then how is a common Hindu supposed to be lead in a straight path if he chooses to follow Hinduism.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: Yes, it is a good question. If you have heard this whole dialogue, from the beginning we ave said that scriptures are there that people are not following the scriptures, both in Islam and the Holy Qur'an also people are not following. That is why so many people are getting into different form of violence and all these things. Peace is not being spread by even few people. Same way, a few priests may be doing wrong but that is not the religion. But in the religion it is very clear, Vedas are the authority and Upanishads are the authority, vedantha is the authority, yoga is the practical way to experience the divinity. And millions of people are following and they are benefiting and this land has created so many saints,

Meera, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Gurunanak Dev, Guru Govind Singhji, name it that is why the Vedas say in the very second verse of Rig Veda,

"Poorvebhir Rishibhir Idhyo Nootanairuta.
Sa Devaneha Vakshati"

There are rishis in the past and there will be rishis in the future and this universe is infinite, it goes on and on, world goes on and on, time to time, sambhavami yuge yuge, Krishna has said I will come in every age to correct the mistakes in the world. In this sense we have to see Shree math Bhagwat Gita, you say read it and another book I would recommend you all to read is yoga vashishta. It is the most amazing scientific and deep knowledge that the planet has. Today world over are recognizing the importance of yoga vashishta. The book of yoga vashishta, we learn about the consciousness. So, it is necessary for everyone to take the knowledge from everywhere, the cream of knowledge form the upanishads, from the Gita, from the Vedanta, and a live a life of love and cooperation, yeah. Thank you.

Question: My name is Vijay Kumar. I am a TV technician. My question to Zakir Naik is whether rebirth is there in Islam and few Muslims they say rebirth is there. And one more thing is what is the Day of Judgment. People die immediately Day of Judgment is there?

Dr. Zakir Naik: Brother has asked a question that is rebirth there in Islam and Day of Judgment if people die do they immediately go to Day of Judgment. As far as rebirth is concerned, Allah says in the Qur'an that Allah made us then caused us to die, then made us come in this world again he caused us to die and again resurrect us. So, there is something like life in this world, we will be again resurrected in the hereafter. So, if you are talking about life after death, yes, we have life after death. But if you are talking about the system similar to the Hindu philosophy or samskara, we say that will be born and you will die again and again you will born and again you will die known as the cycle of birth and rebirth or theory of reincarnation, then no.

We come in this world once and once is sufficient. And if you analyze, I being the student of the Veda and the Hindu scripture, the philosophy of the samskara is derived from the verse from Bhagwat Gita, chapter #4, verse #22, it says that one like a person who throws away the old clothes and puts on new clothes, similarly the soul throws away the body and puts a new body. It is mentioned in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad chapter #4, part #4 verse #3 like a caterpillar walks up a grass of blade and jumps to the next blade of grass; similarly, the human soul throws away the body and goes to a new body. But this philosophy is not according to my study. It is not

mentioned in the Veda. The Veda speaks about punarjanam in book #10, hymn #16, verse # 4 and 5; punar means next, janam means life; punarjanam, next life, yes. Like the Qur'an speaks about next life but does not speak about death/life, dearth/life, death/life; I do not know anywhere in the Veda.

So if you want as Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said, Veda is on the top. So if you want to conciliate the Vedas with the Bhagwat Gita and the Upanishads then we have to agree, fine. The body is there, the soul is there; the body dies then you come again in the next world. So, that I totally agree, there is life after death. But not birth/death, birth/death; this philosophy of samsakara was propounded by the scholars because they could not understand how can some human being be born deaf. Some with congenital heart disease, some are born healthy, some with disease, some in a rich family, some in a poor family so they came with the philosophy of karma about the deed, the action, It should be lead according to the dharma. So, depending upon your deeds, how you do your deeds in next life if you do good deeds you will be born in a higher level. If you do bad deeds, you will be born in a lower form. So, we keep on changing either from animal, from plant, from the human being and the highest form is human being which we take it 7 times. So this, Islam does not agree with. And the Vedas speaks about punar janam,

next life only, we believe. We come in this world once and that is sufficient.

What Islam says in Surah Mulk chapter 67 verse #2, Allathee khalaqa almawta waalhayata(it is Allah who has given death and life to test which of you is good in deeds). Allah says in Surah Baqara chapter #2 verse #155 surely we will test you with hunger, with fear, with loss of life, loss of goods, loss of wealth, so Allah tells this life is the test for thereafter. As far as philosophy, how can people be born handicapped, some people rich family, some people poor family. Qur'an says in Surah anfaal, chapter #8 verse #22 that almighty God has given you wealth and your children as a test for you. This life is a test for the hereafter. So some people, almighty God makes them born in rich family, some in a poor family; this is a test.

Now, the person who has wealth, Allah says every rich person has to pay Zakat for the poor man he has to give no Zakat. So we may think gareeb aadmi poor man but for him in test of Zakat, he gets 100 out of 100, the rich man he may give proper Zakat, may not give. If he gives 100% correct Zakat, he gets 100 out of 100. He may give part Zakat, he may get 50 marks, may not give Zakat, he may get zero. The poor man gets full marks in Zakat. It is a test. Similarly, almighty God tests some people with health, some children with congenital defects. Not that they have done some sin in previous life, because every

child according to Islam is born sinless, is maasoom, it is a test for the parents. If a person is born with a heart disease that does not mean that he has done some sins. If he is born poor, it is not sin. Because the criteria go to heaven is not he should have money or he should have health. It is may be God is testing the parents. So in this way we believe in hereafter regarding a question on judgment, Allah says in Surah Al-Imran, chapter #3 verse #185, Kullu nafsin tha-iqatu almawtiwa.

Every soul shall have a taste of death but the final recompense will be on the Day of Judgment. If you do a sin here, you may be partly punished, may not be punished. The final punishment is the hereafter which is even mentioned in the Vedas about swarg about narak. So if you do good deeds, you will go to swarg, you will go to heaven and on the Day of Judgment everyone, if you die, all the human beings from day one till last day will be resurrected together on the Day of Judgment. And there God will be just, everyone who deserves whatever action he has done, he will get a reward If it is good, will get a punishment if it is bad. Hope this answers the question.

Question: Salamualaikum, my name is Rudrak Fatma and I am a housewife. First of all I do like to thanks Mr. Zakir Naik for his vast knowledge. Okay, we are very thankful to him. My question is today we talked about peace, love and tolerance. To make this world a better place to live. In

the other sense to make our lives easier, safe, and comfortable. I want to ask respected Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is what is our first duty? Should it be towards humanity that is human being as a whole or towards the creator of the world, human being and this universe, Thank you.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: One thing I would beg to differ taking a link from the previous is, we in India as Hindus we definitely believe in rebirth. And today world over psychologists are using regression as therapy to cure people. People who do not even believe in rebirth are all experiencing because the mind consciousness is nothing but energy and intelligence. So the first law of thermodynamics, even scientifically it is proven that the consciousness continues. This will answer many child prodigies. Three and four year old children, they play violin, they play veena, without even going to school. I myself is a witness, I have recited the whole Bhagwat Gita, no body taught me before. So these are all samskara which are present in the mind before. So we need to be open to that discussion that is why Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Shintoism all the religions do believe in rebirth and continues of a consciousness. Now coming to the duty of people, yes it is very important first and foremost we should spread peace and love that is our first duty. And by that duty we believe jana seve janardhana seve. Working for people is the worship of divinity of the God. So kaayakave kailasa is the word that

Basavanna gave us here and great Islamic scholars like Shishunala Shareef all came here, they sang in praise of this philosophy and they all were greatly benefited. So this principle of kayakave kailasa, help the people and that is why you jana seve janardhana seve. We have to worship the divinity through service to humanity. Thank you very much I know it is very late.

Question: My name is Mithra. I work for Oracle. I really appreciated and loved so much when you said like I do not consider a person a Muslim when he is not spreading peace and I was clapping away to glory here. But why in all over the world, it is not only in India, freneticism and terrorism is related to Islam and what are the leaders doing to avoid, like to get away this bad name for Islam.

Dr. Zakir Naik: Sister has asked a very good question that what are we doing and why is Islam linked to the word terrorism etc. This is mainly because of the media.According to the time magazine, on an article which came on the 16th of April, 1979, it said that more than 60,000 books have been written against Islam in a span of 150 years from 1800 to 1950. Everyday more than one book and after 11th September this has reached epidemic levels.

People are quoting verses of the Qur'an out of the context that telling things of Islam it does not exist in Islam and

the most common verse of Surah Tauba chapter #9 verse #5 that wherever you find a kaafir you kill him and if you open the Qur'an chapter #9 verse #5 it does speak and say that wherever you find kaafir, kill him, it is out of context. The context is for a first few verses, it speaks about the peace treaty between the Muslims and the mushriks of Mecca. This peace treaty was unilaterally broken by the mushriks of Mecca so by the time almighty God reached verse #5 he says you put things straight in 4 months time, otherwise the declaration of war. And in the battle field almighty God tells the Muslims that when the enemies, when the kaafirs, when they come to attack you in the battle field, do not get scared, fight, kill them but naturally any army general, to boost up the morality, will tell the soldiers to fight and kill. He will not say that be killed.

So this is out of context and people like Arun Shourie who is one of the staunchest critics in India of Islam he writes the book "The World of Fatwa" and he after quoting Surah Tauba chapter #9 verse #5 he jumps to verse #7, you know why? Because verse #6 has the reply, verse #6 says if the kaafir seeks asylum wants peace, do not just give it to him escort him to go to a place of security and every verse of the Qur'an speaks the worse as a last resort, were fighting has to be used as last resort, it always says peace is better. If they say peace give them peace and I being a student of comparative religion, all the

major religions of the world, their scriptures speak about fighting but as the last resort; so that peace will prevail and similarly as Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was mentioning about Bhagawat Gita, it is advised of Sri Krishna given to Arjun in chapter #1 verse #43 to 48 Arjun says he puts his arms on the battle field of the ground and says I would prefer being killed unarmed rather than fight my cousins.

Immediately a few verse in later in chapter #2 of Bhagwat Gita verse #2 and #3 Sri Krishna says how could such impurities come in you mind. It will take you away from the heavenly planets. How could you become so impotent? He continues and says in Bhagwat Gita chapter #2 verse #31 to 33, you are kshatriya, you are a warrior, it is your duty to fight, blessed are those ksahtriyas, who get a chance to fight and if you read the Mahabharath, the Mahabharath has more verses of fighting than Qur'an but the Hindu tells me it is truth against falsehood, I said that is what the Qur'an says. So, we have no problem. We agree with it.

Similarly if you can analyze that if you read in context, we will realize that all the religion as a last resort, to let peace prevail they do allow violence how Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said that the duty of the warrior is to fight, like how every country has a police force. As a last resort to check the criminals for peace prevail, the police does use force against the criminal that is what the Qur'an gives

permission but people quote of context and malign is Islam that is the reason today people say that Islam is the religion of terrorism for more details you can watch my video cassette "Jihad and Terrorism in the Right Perspective". I Hope this answers your question. Waakhiru daAAwahum ani alhamdu lillahi rabbi alAAalameena.

Dr. Zakir Naik's response to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Alhamdulillah, wa salaathu wa salaam ala rasoolillah
wa ala ali wa sahabihi wa ajmain, amma baad.
Waqul jaa alhaqqu wazahaqa albatiluinna albatila kana zahooqan. Rabbi ishrah lee sadree Wayassir lee amree Waohlul AAuqdatan min lisanee Yafqahoo qawlee

("My Lord, relieve for me my chest. And make my mission easy. And remove the knot in my tongue so they can understand what I say" The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 20, Verse 25-28)

Respected Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, again my respected elders and my brothers and sisters, I welcome you once again with the Islamic greetings Asalaam walaikum wa rahmathullahi wa barakathuhu (may peace, mercy and blessing of Allah subhaanawa taala be on all of you).

The Islamic greeting is peace, The topic of today's talk is "Concept of God in Hinduism and Islam in the light of sacred scriptures". Though, I have to give a response to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, therefore I said in Islam, the greeting is peace. Islam comes from the root word salam which means peace. It is a duty of every Muslim and every human being that he should spread peace, if he does not spread peace he is not a Muslim. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar rightly said that sab se prem karo (love everyone). I also

love Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. I love him for the things he has said which I agree (RaviShankar: "you have no choice but loving me.") That is right. Even if I had a choice I would yet love you.

As you rightly said in your talk that let us come on a commonality, on a common platform as I started my talk with taAAalawila kalimatin sawaa-in-baynana wabaynakum (come to common terms as in us and you) which is the first term. So what we have come here for commonalities, but today we are discussing one major commonality that is allanaAAbuda illa Allaha (that we worship one Almighty God) so first let us agree on this commonalities based in the light of the sacred scriptures and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar rightly said that even if we differ, we shake hands. So, even though I differed with some of the points of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar yet I came here because I love him and because we have to agree at least on what is common; but when we love someone there is a saying that father is cruel to be kind.

Sometimes we have to correct the person because you love him . Imagine if a child says something which is wrong he wants to jump from a building, from the 9th floor I can't say I love him go ahead. Because I love him, because I love him I will stop him, so because I love Sri Sri Ravi Shankar so much it becomes my desire that I don't doubt his intention, his intention was to get the Muslims and the

Hindus together but, someone who is not like me broadminded, may take offence with guruji so because I love guruji Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, that is the reason I mentioned all these points which I know he has taken in the right sense, he will not get angry because he is a person who loves.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said "kaun kehatha hai khudha nahi nazar atha hai, dewane se poocho khudha hi sab jagah nazar atha hai. Allah says in the Qur'an in Surah Fusilat chapter #41, verse #53 Sanureehim ayatina feeal-afaqi wafee anfusihim hattayatabayyana lahum annahu alhaq" soon we shall show them our signs in the furthest regions of the horizons until it is clear to them that this is the truth"

Allah says he will show his signs when we see the star we are reminded of the creator, he is the creator. When we see the sun, we are reminded of him. When we see the moon, we are reminded of him Sirf Deewane ko nahin, Allah says in the Qur'an every individual human being, He will see to it that He will show them signs.Not only dewaana(lunatic), every human being, Allah takes the promise that He will show them the signs in the furthest horizons until it is clear to them that this is the truth. So, these are signs of almighty God, they are not God themselves. Jab dewaana (when lunatic), a person who sees God, that means he sees the signs, he cannot call star or

the moon as symbol of God. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has said that in Islam the sun which was a scorching heat, it was hostile. He writes in his book, but the moon and the star, it reminds the person of serenity, of calmness. Therefore it is a symbol, in Islam, a symbol of God. Star and moon is never a symbol of God, it is the symbol of Pakistan. If that is there, it is not a flag of Islam; it is flag of Pakistan and because I love guruji so much. Allah says in the Qur'an Surah Fusilat chapter #41, verse #37 that amongst His signs are the night and the day, the sun and the moon, but do not adore the sun and the moon, adore the creator who has created the sun and the moon. So, as far as signs of Allah is concerned even sun is the sign of Allah in Qur'an even the moon; the stars is not mentioned but the sun and the moon is. But we have to adore the creator not the created, worship the creator not the created. And Sri Sri Ravi Shankar rightly said that we should not criticize the idol worshipers, I agree with him, unless he comes for knowledge. That is what I ended my talk with, the Qur'an says in Surah An-aam, chapter #6, verse #108,"revile not, abuse not, those Gods who they worship God besides Allah, lest in their ignorance, they will revile and abuse Allah subhaanawa taala." I agree with that but Sri Sri Ravi Shankar also said but when they come for knowledge give them knowledge. For example,if some one comes and asks me, if someone says 2 + 2 = 3, 2 +2 = 4, 2 + 2 = 5. I cannot say all are correct because I

love you. I have to say; I love you that is the reason only 2 + 2 = 4 is correct, the other is wrong. Unless I want to make a fool of him and tell him, take 2 rupees, take I rupee now give me 4 rupees. Take 200000 rupees, 100000 rupees give me 300000 rupees. I have to correct him because I love him, I appreciate him. So this is why I started my talk with a verse from the Qur'an, from Surah Israh, chapter #17, verse #81 which says, "Waqul jaa alhaqqu wazahaqa albatiluinna albatila kana zahooqan" (The truth has come and falsehood has perished. Falsehood is always bound to perish!")When truth hath come over falsehood, falsehood perishes. For falsehood, by its nature is bound to perish). Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said that make smile cheap, make anger expensive. I say make smile free, make it absolutely free. We have to love all the human beings. We have to smile with them; but at the same time, because we them, because they are close to us, because they are brothers in one humanity of the same creator, almighty God, thats the reason. If someone makes a mistake, do not rebuke him, do not make fun of him but correct him. If my son does something wrong,not that I will say, because I love you I will make let you continue doing that wrong Because I love him, I will correct him.

So that he gains what is right. And Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said that, don't depend on logic but I find him to be a very logical person. Giving examples of the driver, giving various examples in his talk, this is logic. Therefore

Qur'an says that this is the book for those you understand.

Spirituality demands authenticity, even demands logic according to me. This differentiates between what is right and what is wrong. Time does not permit me to give my response to all, but Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has said many good things which I thank him for that. . I like to tell him that he may have read this book before, the translation of the Qur'an. I request him to read it again. This book,the translation of the word of Allah subhaana wa taala, Almighty God, the glorious Qur'an. I have to end up in 2 minutes. This book, the glorious Qur'an, because it's written by our creator and the topic is concept of God in the light of the scriptures. Therefore, I am restricting as much as possible to the topic and talking about the scriptures because what I say is not what you have come here to hear. What Sri Ravi Shankar says or somebody else says , is not what you have come here. We have come here to hear what is the concept of God in the sacred scriptures.

If I say something which matches with the sacred scriptures that's what I believe what we have. Come here for and this book the glorious Qur'an which is last and final revelation, I call it the best book on the Art of Living and it is mentioned in the scripture, and I invite Sri Sri Ravi Shankar because I love him to his club, to his

organization of Art of Living. We have 1.3 billion followers. I invite him because I love you to this organization of the Art of Living. Allah says in the Qur'an, I would like to end my talk with the quotation of the glorious Qur'an from Sura Al-imraan chapter #3, verse #19 which says, "Inna alddeena AAinda Allahial-Islam" (the only deen, the only religion, the only way of life, the only Art of Living acceptable in the sight of almighty God is acquiring peace by submitting your will to God.

Wa aakhara daawa na alhamdulillaha a rabbi al alameen.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's response to Dr. Zakir Naik

The trouble in the world is we think we are out of compassion trying to help somebody else, in the process we are doing harm to them. Many times, we think our way is the correct way and we try to convert everybody into my way. We should resist from doing this. Only then there can be peaceful coexistence. There can be many logics, okay, I can say son is falling from the building, son doesn't fall for the father to interfere who is taking you as a father now, who is taking you as a son. We shall not use this different types of logic, to say only I am right. Please we will not do this anymore. We will not comment on what the other's beliefs are, what other's systems are because everyone thinks they have a right to teach the people, right to change the world, let us change ourselves first. Let us be loving and let us experience the divinity, this is the unconditional love.

There was a conference once of doctors, they were discussing about pain and there was so much argument and everybody was discussing about pain. There was an elderly gentleman, he came with a stick and gave everybody one and one and said, you know what is pain now? You feel that pain now. For 10 hours you have been discussing about pain, is useless, but feeling pain is different. So that man says, experience the pain.

Similarly, spirituality is an individual, personal goal.It cannot happen by someone telling you something.I am sorry that Rajnish name was brought up here. There are so many saying he has said in this country. One Rajnish, he had his own philosophy. But don't be mislead because one or two people in any religion, there are fundamentalist in every religion. Do not quote them as an example to put down anybody's religion. This is my personal request to everybody. There is Jainism, there is Sikhism. If you talk to sikh, the Sikhs will say their Grantha is the last one. You talk to a Bahai they think they came directly from the god and that is the final word of God. So where diversity is there, we need to honor them. We need to love them from all our heart not just by words. You know sometimes you can say I love you, but you feel it does not come through you.

No agenda please. We will not keep any personal agenda but for welfare of all human beings let us work, let us all take that promise today. We will honor each other, we will go on the path of ahimsa, no violence; even if a child is falling down, go help them with however help you can help them but do not jump on the neck of the child, because the child will die. Your intention is to save the child, but when you fall behind the child on its own body you will kill the child. So let us see that we all come together as as one whole family Vasudhaiva kutumbakam Om shanthi, shanthi, shanthi.

A Review on the Dialogue

Concept of God: Osho, Islam, Zakir Naik and the Acid Test (From www.drvasu.wordpress.com)

by DR V Acharya

First, this is a long article and second I am not a follower of Osho Rajneesh. But I have admired his works and I stop my admiration when the symptoms of greed and materialism becomes evident in his teachings. I like religious, secular and spiritual leaders who have a strong sense of humanism, individuality and service and I felt Rajneesh although he had a strong empathetic social consciousness he never did any practical welfare work for the betterment of society. Rajneesh despite his deep insights into the human condition became a victim of greed and got cut off from the world by his solipsistic tendencies. He eventually became an Ivory tower philosopher albeit an intelligent and colorful one. I have loved reading especially his discourses on the diverse mystical traditions of the world. I also admire his talent of public speaking and his irreverence to religious and political authority. Osho had the guts to critically examine hallowed and respected ideas and people. On most occasions in his public life he exhibited sound reasoning

and conveyed extraordinary insights into the human condition.

I recently happened to bump across a website about an Islamic speaker Dr. Zakir Naik and his talks on the concept of God in different religions. Zakir Naik also had a dialogue with the popular self help guru Sri Sri Ravishankar. Although it was termed a dialogue, it turned out to be more of a debate with Zakir Naik pronouncing his typical clichéd Islamic rhetoric with a full fledged debunking of polytheists and idol worshippers. Zakir Naik also picked on Sri Sri Ravishankar for publishing a book on comparative Islam and Hinduism. This book had Sri Sri Ravishankar comparing some Islamic ideas and concepts and claiming that it originated from Hindu culture. Sri Sri Ravishankar not anticipating the confrontation tried to play it down and looked like he wanted to rush back to the cave in his Ashram. He also was openly apologetic about the publication of this book and tried to escape from the awkward situation by claiming that this book was printed in a hurry and it was written with an intent of bringing the two religious communities closer in the context of a Muslim-Hindu riot. He also pledged that he would not allow printing of further copies of the book.

Sri Sri Ravishankar is not generally known for his discursive thinking and intellect and his big strength is his

emotional appeal to people based on personal charisma and the excellent PR machinery of his organization. Many a times he has goofed up on public platforms. I had once attended a seminar on 'Science and Conciousness' in the Indian Institute of Science and evidenced first hand Sri Sri Ravishankar talking utterly irrelevant things. The other eminent speakers on the podium like the Nobel Laureate Charles Townes (inventor of the laser and maser), the mathematician Roger Penrose and Zoologist Jane Goodall were visibly disturbed by his lack of erudition and grasp of what was being talked about. Sri Sri Ravishankar was also rubbished on stage by the renowned artist and film script writer Javed Akthar. On another occassion Sri Sri wrote an article in a national newspaper comparing Marxism with the teachings of the Bhagwad Gita. He was again rubbished by a lot of readers for his utter lack of understanding of the 'Dialectical Materialism' of Marx (he was not aware and never even mentioned anything about this in the article) or the Vedantic teachings of Bhagvad Gita. He was just content in stating simplistic homilies.

Coming back to the the 'Concept of God' dialogue, Sri Sri Ravishankar completely misjudged the tenor of the whole programme. The audience were predominantly Muslim and were asking well orchestrated and pre-determined questions which I thought came from the medieval missionary polemic against Hinduism. It took sometime

for me to realize that at this age and time there are still majority of the people who do fervently believe in such religious jingoism.Sri Sri Ravishankar's soft stand and unwillingness to debate and confront put him in an awkward position in the programme.

Zakir Naik is well versed in the art of islamic rhetoric and he is quite capable of mesmerizing his Muslim and other unthinking audiences into deception with confusing, illogical and fallacious arguments. Herd instinct is clearly evident in his followers. He makes up for his lack of critical thinking, scientific and rational sense by parroting and quoting by memory verses from religious books and scriptures by their chapter, page, verse and line numbers. This is taken as a sign of scholarship by his flock. He usually receives standing ovation from the Muslim audience whenever he indulges in these theatrics.

My amusement in this debate became more acute when the debater Zakir Naik put poor Osho Rajneesh to the Islamic litmus test, Surah Ikhlas or the touchstone of islamic theology. This Quranic verse or Sura mentions that God is without equal, without origin, without end, and unlike anything else that exists. This is the definition of Allah in the Quran and every other concept of God is weighed against this to create a semantic game to establish that this concept of god is the supreme most. Rajneesh had no defenders in there so it was an one sided debate

with the final judgement of fallibility on Osho pronounced by Zakir Naik. Sri Sri Ravishankar was also apologetic about Rajneesh and he appealed to the audience not to judge other holy men like himself using Rajneesh as the yard stick.

In this article I am trying to defend Rajneesh and eastern traditions against the polemics of the Islamic theologians. My intention of writing this article is because it is clear to me that the worldview and the value system espoused by Osho Rajneesh is far advanced and higher as compared to the value system of the old religions in general and Islam in specific. Rajneesh believed in peace, love, celebration, individuality, freedom of speech and enquiry. He encouraged people to challenge archaic values and traditions. His overall value system is quite humanistic, secular and rational as compared to the narrow parochial values espoused in religions like Islam.

Our scholar Zakir Naik begins his diatribe against Osho Rajneesh with the tone of abhorrence to the Indian godmen and pronounces his judgement before explaining the targeted person's point of view. Picking Rajneesh is kind of very funny because Rajneesh believed in what can be called a Vedantic or quasi pantheistic God. He borderlined on atheism many times. Rajneesh's god as can be evidenced from his voluminous discourses is akin to Spinoza's god to some extent. Osho's God is not the

Allah or a personal God at all, and his system provides no reason for the revelatory status of the Bible or Quran or Vedas or of any religion for that matter. Osho identifies his concept of God with Nature and like Spinoza he employed a reductionist scientism while retaining some traditional eastern terminology. Zakir Naik claims himself to be a student of comparative religion but it is plainly obvious that his knowledge of the Eastern religions is very very superficial and about Osho, he believes what he wants to believe rather than what the Oshoietes or Hindus or Buddhists or Taoists or Jains believe. Also to put things in perspective, although Rajneesh's worldview is quite similar to Hindu, Buddhist & Taoist worldview he never claimed to be a Hindu either by birth or by conviction. He was born a Jain and remained an eclectic. So to pick on him in a debate on the concept of God in Hinduism and Islam is in the first place wrong. Zakir Naik's claim that the followers of Osho Rajneesh called him almighty god shows his profound ignorance of Osho Rajneesh, his followers and his teaching and also his ignorance of the concept of god in eastern traditions.

The Islamic religion like Christianity and Judaism is based on man's blind and obedient response to a divine revelation in the form of a book, the Quran. Quran is a medieval text inspired by the arabic god Allah to his last and final messenger Muhammad. The god of Islam is in principle similar to a Monarch who creates and rules the

world with a set of laws. The concept of God in Islam is of a God who is apart from the universe and who is a skillful maker of the world. This God stands apart from the world and like a medieval monarch rules the incidents of the world and judges you on the judgement day based on the code of conduct as created in the holy book. You are sent to either heaven or hell based on your submission to the will of Allah and the adherence to the code of conduct as depicted in the Quran. Allah in Islam has no form or can never be depicted. However Allah is depicted through similes and metaphors like Allah is Akbar, ie great or Allah is Rahman or compassionate. The not so subtle Islamic theologians fail to grasp that even 'figures' of speech are depictions and are a form of idolatry. Idolatry is very much existent in Islam although in a veiled format. Islam is replete with symbols which are held sacrosanct and any blasphemy to those symbols are not treated kindly by the Muslim diaspora around the world. It is sacrilegious in Islam to picturize or idolize God but the attachment to symbols is quite evident in Islam and it is much more than what is present in the so called condemned pagan idolatrous religions. For example the Islamic prayer is only in Arabic it cant be localized in any other languages. All muslims bow their heads towards mecca for their prayer. Allah is an extremely localized god. So to compare a localized god with localized rituals to the concept of Vedantic Brahman which has no name, form and which permeates all existence is like as they say

comparing chalk with cheese. The Islamic scholars are morbidly against idolatry in other religions but the mote in their own eye they seeth not.

Zakir Naik's claim that Muslims are the culmination of Vedantic teachings of non idolatry is ridiculous to say the least. The intent of the Vedantic assertion about the sadhaka or the person on the vedantic path leaving behind all the idols and symbols means the sacrifice and trancendence of all those constructs of thought like symbols, idols and ideologies to realize the unconditioned consciousness, the eternal which can never be limited by thought which is just memory and the past. In the early part of the previous century people witnessed an enlightened person Baghwan Ramana Maharishi who had no need for any rituals, images, symbols or holy texts and he abided all the time in his true nature which is pure consciousness. When Vedantists talk about the culmination or the embodiment of their tradition they refer to a person like Ramana Maharishi. I wonder what the Muslim practice of non-idolatry has got to do with this state. This clearly shows that self proclaimed scholars like Zakir Naik have absolutely no clue about what Vedanta is all about. His understanding of Vedanta is totally flawed and he is content in just picking up those verses from the Upanishads and Bhagwad Gita which depict the (so called) monotheistic principle of Brahman and which is in some ways similar to the concept of Allah.

There is a huge difference between the Monism (even dualism or qualified monism) of the Vedanta to the monotheistic belief in a Sky God like Allah. Monism is the acknowledgement of oneness of the universal principle of consciousness or Brahman.

What is the concept of god according to Vedanta. The Upanishads talk of Brahman as Sat-Chit-Ananda which is truth-consciousness-bliss. The Brahman is both unmanifest and manifest as Brahman or God has to be inclusive of everything. It is both Nirguna and Saguna. It has qualities and no qualities. There is a dialectical process of reasoning which is employed to express the inexpressible quality of Brahman or God. Essentially Brahman is the substratum of all that exists and being the substratum it is also different from all that exists. There is a trancendent quality of Brahman which is in some way similar to the monotheistic God. But the Upanishads are unequivocal in their claim that language fails to describe Brahman which is infinite (Anantha) and therefore it is depicted by dialectic reasoning like 'It is far and it is near, it is the lowest and it is the highest'. There are many extremely poetic verses in the Vedantic texts which describe the dialectic 'qualities' of Brahman.

Zakir Naik states that "The major difference between the Hindus and the Muslims is the apostrophe 's'. The Hindu says, "everything is GOD". The Muslim says, "everything

is God's", GOD with an Apostrophe 's'. If we can solve the difference of the Apostrophe 's', the Hindus and the Muslims will be united." Well Zakir Naik got it all wrong. The difference between Hinduism and Islam is that the Hindu believes that everything is 'God as well as everything is God's' and Islam believes that everything is just God's. The nearest point of convergence between Hinduism and Islam can be achieved by equating the qualities of Allah to Nirguna / Nirvikalpa Brahman and that is only after sanitizing the Allah concept of all the localized Arabic mumbo jumbo. However Brahman is much more than a transcendent and monotheistic sky god as it is both Nirguna and Saguna. It is without qualities as well as it has qualities. Because a god if he(or she or it) is worth being called a god has to be all encompassing. From the literal interpretation of Quran we can deduce that in Islam, Allah is separate from the world and Allah as a being lives probably somewhere up in the sky or another dimension. It is a sky god religion. If the God is separate from the world then Allah has to have a separate location and hence it becomes physical and materialistic with space-time coordinates . It is important to understand that the Islamic god is not Omnipresent and this god or Allah exists at some specific location which is distinct from the world created by Allah. In the vedic paradigm this is considered as nonsense as the universe has no beggining and end and God if he or she or it is worth being called a god has to be omnipresent and not localized at some

corner of the universe from where this god directs all the actions of the world.

The idolatory in Hinduism is a symbolic representation of the divinity of the whole universe itself and in its essential form this brings about a reverence to the whole of this wonderful acausal creation. The Vedanta as also the Jain and Buddhist scriptures clearly mention that the world is acausal and it has always existed. To point to the origin of the universe at a specific time in history either through a God creating the universe or through some big bang is a logical fallacy as we would end up with the question as to what existed prior to this creation. How can something come out of nothing. Most of the eastern religions have deduced that the world has always existed in some form or the other. This appeals to logical and scientific sense than the stories of Genesis or the Islamic creation myth. Hence we find that the eastern religions hold a great attraction to the scientific and metaphysical philosophers of the west.

Now coming to the fact of Rajneesh calling himself Baghwan or God. Osho Rajneesh has clarified many times that he is not the God who created this world. 'No not me' he mentioned jokingly once. "I didn't create this world with all the strife and suffering. I would have created a better place had I been God". Surely Rajneesh never equated himself to the Allah, the medieval monarch like god. It would be good if Zakir Naik and his cohorts

read some of the works of Osho (I have provided a link to a well know Osho site in the end for all the readers) and then try to counter him in arguments. Also he might do well to study Upanishadic texts in proper context rather than just using polemics and picking up verses which suit the rigid monotheistic belief system.

One key thing that most Islamists forget when criticising Hinduism and eastern traditions is that in the eastern tradition the spiritual path is individualistic and not based on a single holy book or frozen canon or teachings of a prophet. Hindu traditions are unlike the 'collective salvation deal' espoused by the Abrahamic religions. This individualistic approach although a great step in religious and cultural evolution of humanity has politically weakened Hinduism and it has become an easy target to the devious designs of islamists and christian evangelist missionaries, who are hell bent on bringing down a greater tradition to their crude level of understanding of religion.

Many of the evangelists and mullahs are in the habit of ridiculing some cultural symbols and personalities of the Hindu religion. Unlike the Monotheistic religions which are history centric i.e history is all important for man's access to god, the eastern traditions have many incarnations, perennial access to truth and it is independent of history. That is the reason why Hindus call their religion 'Sanatana Dharma', eternal religion. To

confine the advent of religion to a single prophet or set of prophets receiving revealation at a specific point of history is to limit the omnipotence of the divine. The intent of the Upanishadic religion or dharma is not just following a book but living as per the natural laws of life. A book however sacred or profound cannot capture truth because truth is a unitary moment which has to be discovered and rediscovered from moment to moment. So it is very silly from the perspective of Vedanta that God chooses some messenger like Muhamad or Jesus or Abraham or Noah and reveals to him some revelation and some dose of good social conduct and disappears into oblivion for eternity. Why is Allah so limited that he needs to communicate to only one person and the rest of humanity just need to follow all these codified injunctions. The message of the Upanishads is that God or Brahman cannot be captured in words much less in books. The semetic religious cannon can be aptly described as a set of few rules, universalized and canonized forever. However the dharma in the eastern traditions allows for an individualistic context based interpretation.

The Dharmic value system is evolutionary and changes with the changing times exept for certain universal absolutes which are eternal. Hence in the Hindu tradition you have two classes of scriptures, the Shruthi and the Smrithi. Shruthi is the inspired part and are universal in their appeal and application. Smrithi, means that which

comes from memory and it comprises of the social rules of conduct and other mundane aspects of human existence. Shruthi is changeless and smrithi is something which needs to be revisted and adapted to changing times and circumstances. Shruthi is somewhat akin to the categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant and Smrithi is similar to the hypothetical imperative. The essential problem with Islam is the mixture of Shruthi and Smrithi in Quran. Hence you find many recommended practices in Quran which were relevant during the time and context of 7th century arabia and which does not make any sense in a multicultural, cosmopolitan, secular and humanistic world. Zakir Naik's claim that Quran is the greatest book on Art of Living is a ridiculous claim to majority of the people living by humanistic and democratic values. Sri Sri Ravishankar's 'Art of Living' is similar to many modern day Hindu movements and it is an adaptation of yogic principles of health, vedantic theology, value system of modern humanistic psychology and the practices of the human potential movement. Osho Rajneesh contributed a great deal in the evolution of the Human Potential Movement. Islam with its frozen in time approach comes nowhere close to any of these systems in terms of content and quality.

Unlike the essential belief of one supreme being of the monotheistic semetic religions like Islam, the eastern religious traditions have a different paradigm of looking at

this rigid structure of belief. There are some eastern traditional lineages which demand a priori belief in a supreme being and this supreme being can be either a male or female or both or neither. There are traditions which believe in the impersonal nature of ultimate reality and it allows multiple representations and multiple access to the one supreme lord. 'As many people so many paths' remarked the famous sage of Dakshineshwar, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. This flexibility has been considered and ridiculed as a weakness by many of the monotheistic preachers, however this is the inherent strength of the Hindu tradition. This showcases the inherent liberal and catholic(in the sense of all encompassing) views of the eastern religious paradigm. Monotheism has been rightly stated as My-Theism by several secular critiques of religion like Professor Richard Dawkins.

Some thoughts by Osho on brahman and god - "Brahman has nothing to do with the Christian or muslim idea of God. Brahman means godliness, the divineness that pervades the whole existence… the whole, the holiness of the whole.". In his own words Osho claimed that he is God based on the following "Samadhi begins with subjective awareness and culminates in realization of our divine self, the all permeating godliness - within and without. This is the state in which the 'Rishis' in the east declared 'Aham Brahmasmi', the state in which sufi mystic

Mansur declared 'Ana'l Haq', the state in which Jesus says, 'I and my Father are one'. This state is called 'Sambodhi', enlightenment, divine realization". When the tombstone of Osho has the message "Osho Never Born and Never Died", it is a mention to the immortal and unconditioned Consciousness - the Self of all or 'Brahman'. It is not the physical body of Osho as the physical body is perishable and what is not perishable is consciousness the substratum of all that exists. This Consciousness has no origin and no end, it has no 'adi' and 'antya'. When Osho or eastern mystics affirm that they are God, they mean that everything else is as well God and the individual bodies are like waves in the ocean and the self, which is unconditioned awareness is the ocean itself.

Our 'scholar of comparative religion' Zakir Naik accuses Rajneesh of proclaiming himself the God in the Semetic / abrahamic / Islamic religious sense. If these scholars of comparative religions can make up a good study of Rajneesh then hopefully they can come up with some wise arguments than just picking him up on some silly semantics. This is the problem with Muslim scholars, they are just too caught in words, symbols, obedience and adherence to arcane medieval texts that make their minds so closeted. But still they have the nerve or rather the foolhardiness to proclaim that Islam is a scientific religion.

If you are a scholar of comparative religion or philosophy the first pre-requisite is to understand the paradigms, models and cultural symbols of that particular religion or school of thought. Without this understanding the interpretation of a particular religion will remain parochial and not true to the spirit. Finally I would like to request all the readers to consider and reflect on two of the greatest sentences from Rig Veda, the oldest known religious scripture in the world - "Truth is one but wise men describe it in many ways" and "Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides". Let's not limit the noble thoughts to come from a book or a few more books.

You can read Osho's books online from the following sites:

http://www.oshoworld.com
http://www.osho.com

Some intresting links to hindu and vedanta sites:

http://www.advaita-vedanta.org/avhp/ad_faq.html
http://www.vedanta.org
http://www.ramana-maharshi.org
http://www.geocities.com/advaitavedant/- This link was created by my friend and has lots of texts on advaitha vedanata.